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MINE EYES TO THE HILLS

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TOWARDS THE END OF SEPTEMBER

# MINE EYES TO THE HILLS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE HIGHLAND FOREST

*Arranged by*

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

*Illustrated by*

V. R. BALFOUR-BROWNE



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*DEDICATION*

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TO THE IMMORTAL MEMORY  
OF  
THE MUCKLE HART OF BENMORE  
*Died October 1833*

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## INTRODUCTION

OF the making of this book there might surely have been no end, for the literature of the forest is plentiful. It is, anthologically speaking, virgin ground, and it is full of the purple patches of which anthologies are made. And, when we except the story of The Muckle Hart of Benmore, it has never a classic that I know of for the anthologist to avoid. And why, a reader may ask, should what is classical be shunned by the anthologist? Because, I would tell him, I consider that the aim of the maker of anthologies should be to provide a nosegay of the lesser known, but equally beautiful, flowers in the prose and in the poetry of his subject. I consider that the buyer of an anthology does not desire to dip into his purchase and find there nothing but the friends of his boyhood, the friends of every day. His intimates these, he loves them and he is, of course, very glad to see them at all times, *but*—are they what he has paid his money for?

And so, having done homage to the Great Hart's memory and given (by the courtesy, as you will see, of Mr. Frank Wallace) the particulars of his weight, his colour, his antlers, data which Mr. St. John so inexplicably omits in *Wild Sports*, I have said no further direct word upon that famous hunting. And, throughout, I have tried to make my book one not only for the proved forester but a book too for all who love the hills and the wilderness, for all who love the birds and the beasts, the fairies and the folk that make the enchanted lands. And in thus studying to please the general reader as well as

the deer-stalker I have been mindful to avoid what is technical, I have been wishful not to dwell too much upon the villainy of saltpetre, and I have aimed to do my work for its amusement's sake rather than for its instruction. It is an insular book, and so foreign deer and mountains across the sea come into it not at all. It is a work on stalking and so it has no scissoring from Mr. Fortescue's beautiful *Life of a Red-Deer*, that epic of the Devon and Somerset, that classic indeed. And to the poetry and the verse that I have been able to include I have applied the same test as I have applied to my selections of prose. Therefore, you will find here little of Sir Walter, little of Mr. Stevenson, but since, like myself, you have their books by heart you will understand and acquit me of any seeming want of appreciation, any apparent lack of love.

I have spoken of the classic of Benmore; some may miss the Great Hart's book-fellow, the little roebuck whose "beauty saved him". But has not admiration made of the latter a sadly conceited little wretch and will my neglect of him be anything but salutary? And, anyhow, does not half the fun of an anthology lie in remembering for oneself the bits and the pieces that the anthologist, in his innocent ignorance, has omitted or (as you may say) in his woeful want of taste has wilfully passed over? I think it is.

My book has been a delight to make; may some of that delight remain for the reader now that my part is done.

•

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I HAVE to acknowledge with grateful thanks permission from the authors and publishers of copyright works to include extracts from the books which appear under their names in the bibliography on page 351. My thanks are due to Mrs. Cameron for allowing me to quote from the late Allan Gordon Cameron's *Wild Red Deer of Scotland*, to Lady Fraser for the extracts from the late Sir Hugh Fraser's *Amid the High Hills*, to Mrs. Lang for quotations from the poems of Andrew Lang, and to the executors of General H. H. Crealock, W. Bromley-Davenport, and Tom Speedy for similar courtesy.

Every effort has been made to trace authors or owners of copyright, and in nearly all cases successfully. If, however, I have here and there failed in my search, may I ask the forgiveness of those concerned for the gems that I have borrowed without their consent? I should like here to thank personally Miss Greenhill Gardyne of Finavon, Sir John Edwards-Moss, Mr. Gilfrid Hartley, and the Edinburgh Library for the courtesy with which they have put invaluable MSS. and books at my disposal. And I would add to these acknowledgements a further gratitude to my friends Vincent Balfour-Browne, Eric Parker, and Frank Wallace for the freedom of their libraries so cordially bestowed.

P. R. C.



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# PRELUDE



*Come back to the Glen! To the Glen! To the Glen!*

PIPE TUNE

<b>INVERNESS from Euston,</b> 568 miles, via Dunkeld. Fares, 109/7d, 65/9r. R.T. for 3 months, 219/2s, 131/6c. Tourists (May to Oct.), 201/0s, 120/9c. Pop. 24,614. <i>Map Square 34.</i>			
<b>EUSTON INVERNESS.</b>		<b>INVERNESS. EUSTON</b>	
P 1.30	ers 5.45	A 8.30	r 10.45
M 7.30	ers 9.50	M 11. 0r	5. 0k
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A.B.C. RAILWAY GUIDE



## PRELUDE

### *THE FIRST DEER-STALKER*

AND it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison.

*Genesis*

### *“AN INTRODUCTION”*

A Nighean Ghaolach,

With this beginning we speak to you in that which was your first language; for no other can so recall the days and the scenes associated in these fragments. They are the wandering thoughts at the passes of the deer, or in the forest hut—on the cairns of the mountains, and in the wilderness of those dark woods, from the depths of which you have heard the sound of the chase come over the sunny banks, whose flowers, and bees, and butterflies, were then your little world.

If these pages have no interest for others, to you they will recall many recollections filled with the joy of summer, the awe of winter, when fearless as the ptarmigan which fluttered

on the brink, you ran by the dizzy precipices, or when the thunder of the mountain stream came down, watched the night for the sound of our return.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. I*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### TO A READER

At all events, as my little labour may perhaps instigate someone better qualified to execute the task in a more scientific manner, it is humbly hoped the public will not censure where they cannot amend, nor condemn rashly without cause; for an author to expect to please equally would be as ridiculous as for a cook to pretend he could dress a piece of venison that would equally please all palates.

*Instructions for Hunting.* JAMES CHRISTIE, GAMEKEEPER (1817)

### IN THE BEGINNING

Although Red Deer have existed for so long in Scotland, deer-stalking as it is understood to-day is a comparatively recent innovation—so recent, indeed, that the guardian of the grandfather of the present Lord Lovat informed his charge that he hoped he would not so far derogate from his position as to think of going into the forest to shoot deer for himself, as such a practice was neither dignified in a gentleman nor customary.

The first record of the pursuit of deer by stalking is when Cluny Macpherson, Chief of Clan Chattan, engaged in deer-stalking with Mr. Macdonald of Tulloch in 1745.

*The Mammals of Great Britain.* J. G. MILLAIS

## NORTHWARD BOUND

*(Once More)*

Does your heart still beat with the old excitement  
As you wait where the Scotch expresses are?  
Does it answer still to the old indictment  
Of a fond delight in the sleeping-car,  
As it did when the rush through the autumn night meant  
The Gate of Desire ajar?

Or has the enchanting task grown tougher,  
And has that arrow beyond you flown?  
For the hill that was rough enough is rougher,  
The steepest climb that was ever known,  
And the forest appals a veteran duffer  
Sorely beaten and blown?

Oh! the years, the years, they be rusty and mothy;  
Oh! the flesh it is weak, that once was strong;  
But the brown burn under the stone falls frothy  
And the music it makes is a siren song;  
Then the pony'll take you as far as the bothy,  
And that'll help you along.

See! from the tops the mist is stealing,  
Out with the stalking-glass for a spy;  
Round Craig an Eran an eagle's wheeling  
Black in the blue September sky.  
A fig for the years! Why, youth and healing  
At the end of your journey lie.

ALFRED COCHRANE. *By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"*

### WHAT IS A FOREST?

The question "What is a deer forest?" is now seldom asked by persons of an enquiring turn of mind. It is generally understood that the definition is misleading, inasmuch as there need not be, and seldom are, any trees within the area of pasture-land set apart for the use of the deer. At the same time the fact that these areas should be known by the name of Forests serves to confirm the opinion, if confirmation be necessary, that vast regions of the Highlands were in former times covered with indigenous forests of the various species of trees, whose descendants, in sadly diminished numbers, are found at the present day scattered among the valleys and on the hillsides of most of our northern counties.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### THE FASCINATION OF THE FOREST

The fascination of deer-stalking is largely due to the romance of the hill—the hill as it is known only to those who love it and understand something of its hidden mysteries. The long day with the silent but sympathetic stalker—alone with Nature in its most inspiring and elevating form—the ever-changing beauty of sky and hill—the joy of watching deer when they have no suspicion that they are being watched—the opportunities of seeing rare birds and finding rare plants—all these things apart from the difficulty and interest—and the greater the difficulty the greater the interest—of trying to outwit—in other words trying to get within shot of the particular stag one is after—go to make up the attractions of what is the very best of true sport.

Further, there is probably no form of sport where less pain and suffering are inflicted, assuming that anyone who stalks

will take the trouble to know his rifle well, and will not take a long or risky shot.

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

### DEER-STALKING

A modern rifle is a handier and a safer weapon than a muzzle-loader, but the essential elements of the sport are the same as they were ever since the invention of gunpowder and telescopes. The stalker has to go out on foot, find the deer with his glass, and stalk them by his knowledge of the ground and by his ability to take advantage of the wind, in exactly the same way as his ancestors stalked them on the same hills from time immemorial.

*The Passing Years.* LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

### THE ROAD

There are some that love the Border-land and some the  
Lothians wide,  
And some would boast the Neuk o' Fife and some the banks  
o' Clyde,  
And some are fain for Mull and Skye and all the Western  
Sea;  
But the Road that runs by Atholl will be doing yet for me.

The Road it runs by Atholl and climbs the midmost brae  
Where Killiecrankie crowns the pass with golden woods and  
gay;  
There straight and clean 'twas levelled where the Garry runs  
below  
By Wade's red-coated soldiery two hundred years ago.



The Road it strikes Dalwhinnie where the mountain tops are  
grey  
And the snow lies in the corries from October time till May;  
Then down from bleak Ben Alder by Loch Ericht's wind-  
swept shore  
It hastes by Dalnaspidal to the howes of Newtonmore.

The Road it runs through Badenoeh, and still, and on it rings  
With the riding of the clansmen and a hundred echoings;  
Oh, some they rode for vengeance and some for gear and gain,  
But some for Bonnie Charlie rode and came not home again.

The Road it runs by Alvie—you may linger if you list  
To gaze on Ben Muich-Dhui and the Larig's cap of mist;  
There are pines in Rothiemurchus like a gipsy's dusky hair,  
There are birch-trees on Craigellachie like elfin silver-ware.

The Road it runs to Forres and it leaves the hills behind,  
For the roving winds from Morayshire have brought the sea  
to mind;  
But still it winds to northward in the twilight of the day,  
Where the stars shine down at evening on the bonny haughs  
of Spey.

Oh, there's some that sing of Yarrow stream, Traquair and  
Manor-side,  
And some would pick the Neuk o' Fife and some the banks  
o' Clyde;  
And some would choose the Pentlands, Cauldstaneslap to  
Woodhouselee,  
But the Road that runs by Atholl will be doing yet for me.

*The Loud Speaker.* CHRISTINE ORR

### THE ESSENTIAL THING

Good fellowship, and a perfect understanding between neighbours, is desirable in all forms of sport. Where deer are concerned it is essential.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### MR. WILLIAM SCROPE ON HIS PLEASURE

That it is a chase which throws all our other field-sports far in the background, and, indeed makes them appear wholly insignificant, no one who has been initiated in it will attempt to deny. The beautiful motions of the deer, his picturesque and noble appearance, his sagacity, and the skilful generalship which can alone ensure success in the pursuit of him, keep the mind in a constant state of pleasurable excitement.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE CIVIC HAUNCH

Turtle and venison!—they are the symbols of civic luxury. We dare to say that the typical haunch, with all that precedes and follows it, from the iced punch and Madeira to the curious old cognac, has done more than the example of Whittington or Gresham to animate aspirants to the gown and the golden chain. It is like the leg of mutton on the greased pole scrambled for by ragged tatterdemalions.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

*THE JOY OF VACATION*

Moreover, one is tired and jaded. The whole man, body and soul, like sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh, is fagged with work, eaten up of impatience, and haunted with visions of vacation. At last it comes, the 1st of August, and then—like an arrow from a Tartar's bow, like a bird from its cage, like a lover to his mistress—one is off; and before the wild scarlets of sunset die on the northern sea, one is in the silence of the hills, those eternal sun-dials that tell the hours to the shepherd, and in one's nostrils is the smell of peat-reek, and in one's throat the flavour of usquebaugh.

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH

*A TOAST*

Away with gloomy fears! Here, to the readers of this book is the translation of the deer-stalker's Gaelic toast:

“The day we see you, the day we don't;  
The day we kill a deer, the day we don't:  
We wish you well.”

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHIE

# THE START



*Then he said, "In yonder forest there's a little silver river  
And whosoever drinks of it his youth shall never die".*

ALFRED NOYES



# THE START

## THE EAGER SPORTSMAN

AN eager sportsman never sleeps nor slumbers; or if he does so by way of variety, he starts into life at once, and springs up from his bed as if the deer were actually before him: neither does he say, "Sandy, bring me the balls"; nor, "Charlie, bring me my powder-flask," or my jacket, or my shoes, or anything else of the sort; for he has very methodically laid out all these things on his dressing-table overnight with his own proper hands. To be dependent on others in these matters is exceedingly youthful: no, he trusts to no man's vigilance, but relies upon his own.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

## THE WIND

The consideration which is paramount in deer-stalking operations is the direction of the wind, and the first question asked by the sportsman who is to go on the hill on any given morning is "How is the wind?"

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

## STALKING WEATHER

The most propitious day for deer-stalking is a cloudy one with blinks of sunshine—exactly such as you would choose

for fishing. When the sky is cloudless, and the sun very dazzling, the herd are apt to see you at a great distance, and take alarm. High and changing wind is always very bad, as it keeps them moving about in a wild and uneasy state. In such weather it is better, if possible, to wait till it settles a little, and take advantage of the first calm. If the breeze be light, they will not move much, but a strong steady wind lasting for some days will always make the deer change their ground, by facing it often for miles. Mist is the worst of all, as the deer are pretty sure to see *you* before *you* see *them*.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

We will now suppose it to be a nice fine day, and everything ready for a start from the lodge. Be sure that cartridges, coat, lunch, flask, pipe and tobacco are all with you, for in parts of the Highlands it is thought to bring bad luck to turn back for anything after having once made a start, and to do this will put some stalkers quite out of heart for the day. What nonsense! is the natural exclamation, but all the same, should the stalker be a believer in this superstition, on no account balk him. He certainly will not confess off-hand to this feeling; he may go a whole season and never mention it, although plenty of articles be forgotten and he sent back for them, but one day when something extra bad has happened to interfere with the sport, he will perhaps quietly confide in you. Therefore, once possessed of the knowledge of this fetish on his part, if lunch or tobacco is found missing a short distance from home, why, go on boldly without it. The stalker will not have forgotten either one or the other as far as he is concerned, and will be proud to give you a bite, or a pipe of his black cavendish.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

*THE GUEST*

The guest when he goes out should endeavour to think of others besides himself and his own sport, and should not try to bully or cajole the stalker into allowing him to spoil the chances of the man who is to go out next day.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

*THE DEER-STALKER'S MOULD OF FORM*

If a deer-stalking gentleman was asked what was the best make for speed and endurance of fatigue, he would probably describe his own figure as accurately as possible, and that with the greatest appearance of candour, looking around upon his fair or foul proportions, as it may happen. In this there is abundance of encouragement; and, indeed, I am inclined to think that men go in almost all shapes. One of the most active men I ever saw was Richmond, the black pugilist, and he was knock-kneed to a deformity. Set before me a man that is long from his hip downward, closely ribbed up, and with powerful loins; take care that he be straight, and of the happy medium between slim and stout; let his muscle be of marble, and his sinews of steel. Heavens, how the fellow will step out! And what tremendous odds are half a foot in every step! See with what an elastic spring he recovers his legs! I swear by Atalanta and Achilles, the swift of foot, that this is the man I would back to go right up the Andes without deviating an iota from the straight line. I must add, however, that his lungs should be pre-eminent, because in long runs (say of six or seven miles at a stretch), through bogs and over mountains, wind will be found an article most particularly in demand. After all a man should be trained in the way he should go as soon as he is out of petticoats; if not, the symmetry of the Antinous will avail



him nought. I have not the slightest doubt, indeed, but that Pan would have caught Daphne much sooner than Apollo.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE "GENTLEMAN"

We have left the Lodge by the turf path that borders the burn; past the tropæolum on the gamekeeper's cottage wall, past the harebells and the wild raspberries under the larch wood, along the sheep-cut tracks through the ling and bell-heather, and we are out on the open moor. Above us the path turns right and left in the bracken up the hill; we climb by it to the grey stones above, by wet mosses and shining quartz, to the spaces of thin grass beyond the heather; we climb higher over that wiry grass to the sky-line beyond that; farther still to a rim of boulders, to which we creep on all-fours. We peer over the rim; the stalker's glass comes from its case, and we are spying for deer.

I know no morning in all the year which is to be set beside that first hour in the forest. You are looking out over the largest corrie of the glen, and the far flank of it rises green-grey and boulder-sown into blue air; beyond the glen the hills shoulder each other to the horizon; and set about the floor and the slopes below you are spaces in which you are watching deer—a stag with half a dozen hinds here, a lot of thirty stags and hinds there, and on a wide plain by the burn a great herd feeding, every sort of head among them from switch to ten-pointer—that heavy beast with his dark mane there among the peat-hags. Will you choose him to stalk? There are others—a royal, you think, in that lot half hidden. Which shall it be? The morning, the day, the stalk lies before you; the Lodge, the telephone, the post are miles away; London scarcely exists. You are alone on the hill with your stalker and the pony-man;





“THERE ARE THOSE DEER IN THE SUN”

there are those deer in the sun, with a quiet wind blowing—what other hour, in what other place, would you choose before the freedom of this?

*Introduction by Eric Parker to "Days on the Hill". "AN OLD STALKER"*

### THE STALKER

He is to take you up to one of those deer; what does he think of the day's work? Is it work or pleasure? Does he, too, look at the sun and the sky, as you do, and thank Heaven for such a day? Not exactly as you do. To him the sun and the wind mean something else besides. They will decide the plans, they will control the end, of the day; and the end of the day he hopes will be a good stag saddled on the pony—a heavy beast for the larder, a great head for the Lodge wall. And you, too, are something else besides his "gentleman"; you are either a good or a bad shot, a pleasant companion or not, you will be lucky or unlucky, and you will make or mar his day for him. You are out on a holiday. This is his day's work.

Not that he does not delight in it. To him it is the supreme activity of the year, this business of stalking stags in the corries of this forest. There is the hind-shooting to follow in the winter, but it is only the stags that count. And the stalking is but a short season, from the last days of August, when the heads are coming clean of velvet, to the middle of October, when the stags roar for the rut; and through those ten weeks he is out day after day on the hill, with different plans for the approaching of different beasts, with different paths up the hill to his beat, different weather, different winds. And how well he knows the ground! Since he was a boy he has heard his father and the other stalkers and gillies talk of the forest and its deer; he has walked with the grouse-shooters on the low ground and the tops; he has learnt the tracks of the shep-

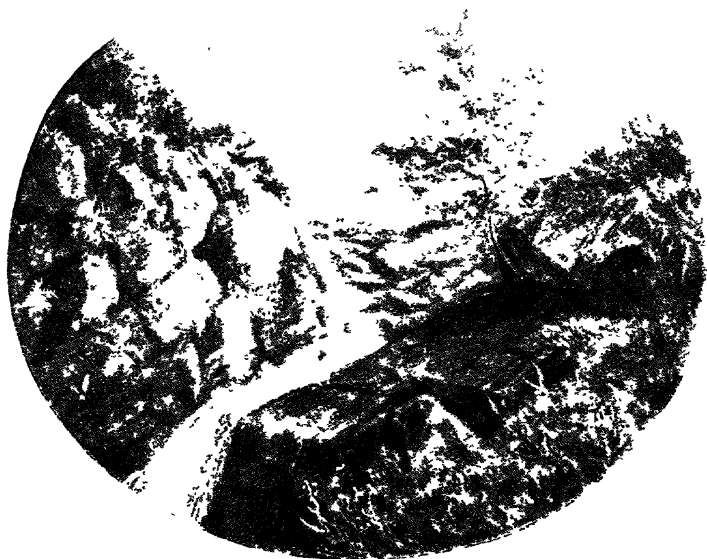
herds and the lines of the fences along the march; he has found his way about the forest by day and by night, in mist and in snow, ever since he was first allowed to come out and help with the hind-shooting—hard work, that, with so many to be entered in the account-books by February! And now that he is a man, and himself takes men up to deer, he is proud of his knowledge and his skill. He has bought both by experience, and how long and how various his experience has been you may guess when he has picked for you the stag you are to stalk, and tells you how he means to bring you to him, and his hopes and fears of chances by the way.

This is the “old stalker”; this is the gifted and tested hunter of deer, whom every young gillie, every boy who is allowed to take the hill for the first time would wish to be.

*Introduction by Eric Parker to “Days on the Hill”. “AN OLD STALKER”*

# THE FOREST

## I. THE MUSIC OF THE BRAE



*Over the high brown mountain  
The sound of singing goes.*

R. L. STEVENSON



# THE FOREST

## I. THE MUSIC OF THE BRAE

### *LONE PLACES OF THE DEER*

LONE places of the deer,  
Corrie, and Loch, and Ben,  
Fount that wells in the cave,  
Voice of the burn and the wave,  
Softly you sing and clear  
Of Charlie and his men!

Here has he lurked, and here  
The heather has been his bed,  
The wastes of the islands knew  
And the Highland hearts were true  
To the bonny, the brave, the dear,  
The royal, the hunted head.

*New Collected Rhymes.* ANDREW LANG

### *"THE MORNING COMETH"*

I well remember on one occasion discussing the question of the future world with a Highland keeper, and the emphatic way in which he said, "One thing is certain, and that is, that no one could be an atheist if he spent his life on the moun-



tains". I also remember that the same observation was made by one Cambridge undergraduate to another, the speaker having been in the habit of spending days and nights camping out on the mountains of his father's Highland property.

On the sea coast, at the mouth of one of the sea lochs on the west coast of Ross-shire, I have often waited for the dawn, looking up the loch towards the high hills in the distance, and, whilst I waited, there would come into my mind those impressive words of the prophet Isaiah, "Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman says, "The morning cometh". No one who has had this experience and seen the sun rise in its splendour over the high hills, flooding the surface of the sea with brilliant crimson light, will ever forget the scene, or the uplifting of spirit and sense of abiding peace which it imparted.

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

### THE GARDEN OF EDEN

"And are there nae bonny braes and birks in Badenoch? Ye're joost as bad as our minister; but fat need the man say ony thing mair about the matter, fan I tell 'im that I'll prove, frae his ain Bible, ony day he likes, that the Liosmor, as we ca' the great garden in Gaelic, stood in its day joost far the muir o' Badenoch lies noo, an' in nac ither place aneth the sun; isna there an island in the Loch Lhinne that bears the name o' the Liosmor to this blessed day? fan I tell you that, an' that I hac seen the island mysel, fa can doot my word?"

"But, Mac, the Bible says the garden was planted eastward, in Eden."

"Hout! aye; but that disna say but the garden micht be in Badenoch! for Eden is a Gaelic word for a river, an' am shaire there's nae want o' them there; an' as for its bein' east o'er, that is, when Adam planted the Liosmor, he sat in a bonny

bothan on a brae in Lochaber, an' nae doot lukit eastwar' to Badenoch, an' saw a' thing sproutin' an growin' atween im an' the sun fan it cam ripplin' o'er the braes frae Atholl in the braw simmer mornings."

"But, Mac, the Bible further says, they took fig leaves and made themselves aprons; you cannot say that figs ever grew in Badenoch."

"Hout-tout! there's naeboddy can tell fat grew in Badenoch i' the days of the Liosmor; an' altho' nae figs grow noo, there's mony a bonny *fiag* runs yet o'er the braes o' both Badenoch and Lochaber. It was *fiag's* skins, an' no fig blades that they made claes o'. *Fiag*, I maun tell you, is Lochaber Gaelic for a deer to this day."

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### COIRE CHEATHAICH; OR, THE GLEN OF THE MIST

My beauteous corri! where cattle wander—  
 My misty corri! my darling dell!  
 Mighty, verdant, and cover'd over  
 With wild flowers tender of the sweetest smell;  
 Dark is the green of thy grassy clothing,  
 Soft swell thy hillocks most green and deep,  
 The cannach blowing, the darnel growing,  
 While the deer troop past to the misty steep.

Fine for wear is thy beauteous mantle,  
 Strongly woven and ever-new,  
 With rough grass o'er it, and, brightly gleaming,  
 The grass all spangled with diamond dew;  
 It's round my corri, my lovely corri,  
 Where rushes thicken and long reeds blow;

Fine were the harvest to any reaper  
Who through the marsh and the bog could go.

Ah, that's fine clothing!—a great robe stretching,  
A grassy carpet most smooth and green,  
Painted and fed by the rain from heaven  
In hues the bravest that man has seen—  
'Twixt here and Paris, I do not fancy  
A finer raiment can ever be—  
May it grow for ever!—and, late and early,  
May I be here on the hills to see!

Round every well and every fountain  
An eyebrow dark of the cress doth cling,  
And the sorrel sour gathers in clusters  
Around the stones whence the waters spring;  
With a splash and a plunge and a mountain murmur  
The gurgling waters from earth upleap,  
And pause and hasten, and whirl in circles,  
And rush and loiter, and whirl and creep!

Out of the ocean comes the salmon,  
Steering with crooked nose he hies,  
Hither he darts where the waves are boiling—  
Out he springs at the glistening flies!  
How he leaps in the whirling eddies!  
With back blue-black, and fins that shine,  
Spangled with silver, and speckled over,  
With white tail tipping his frame so fine!

Gladsome and grand is the misty corri,  
And there the hunter hath noble cheer;  
The powder blazes, the black lead rattles  
Into the heart of the dun-brown deer;

And there the hunter's hound so bloody  
Around the hunter doth leap and play,  
And madly rushing, most fierce and fearless,  
Springs at the throat of the stricken prey.

O 'twas gladsome to go a-hunting  
Out in the dew of the sunny morn!  
For the great red stag was never wanting,  
Nor the fawn, nor the hind with never a horn.  
And when rain fell and the night was coming,  
From the open heath we could swiftly fly,  
And, finding the shelter of some deep grotto,  
Couch at ease till the night went by.

And sweet it was when the white sun glimmered,  
Listening under the crag to stand—  
And hear the moor-hen so hoarsely croaking,  
And the red cock murmuring close at hand;  
While the little wren blew his tiny trumpet,  
And threw his steam off blithe and strong,  
While the speckled thrush and the redbreast gaily  
Lilted together a pleasant song!

Not a singer but join'd the chorus,  
Not a bird in the leaves was still:  
First the laverock, that famous singer,  
Led the music with throat so shrill;  
From tall tree-branches the blackbird whistled,  
And the grey bird joined with his sweet "coo-coo":  
Everywhere was the blithsome chorus,  
Till the glen was murmuring thro' and thro'.

Then out of the shelter of every corrie  
Came forth the creature whose home is there;

First, proudly stepping, with branching antlers,  
The lordly red-deer forsook his lair;  
Through the sparkling stream he stepped rejoicing,  
Or gently played by his heart's delight—  
The hind of the mountain, the sweet brown princess,  
So fine, so dainty, so staid, so slight!

Under the light green branches creeping  
The brown doe cropt the leaves unseen,  
While the roebuck gravely stared around him  
And stamp'd his feet on his couch of green;  
Smooth and speckled, with soft pink nostrils,  
With beauteous head lay the tiny kid;  
All apart in the dewy rushes,  
Sleeping unseen in its nest, 'twas hid.

My beauteous corri! my misty corri!  
What light feet trod thee in joy and pride,  
What strong hands gathered thy precious treasures,  
What great harts leaped on thy craggy side!  
Soft and round was the nest we plundered,  
Where the brindled bee his honey hath—  
The speckled bee that flies, soft humming,  
From flower to flower of the lonely strath.

And all around the lovely corri  
The wild birds sat on their nests so neat,  
In deep warm nooks and tufts of heather,  
Sheltered by knolls from the wind and sleet;  
And there from their beds, in the dew of the morning,  
Up rose the hind and the stag of ten,  
And the tall cliffs gleamed, and the morning reddened  
The Coire Cheathaich—the Misty Glen!

*Songs and Poems* by DUNCAN BAN MACINTYRE  
(Translated from the Gaelic by Robert Buchanan)

### “FOR LOVE OF LOVELY NAMES”

In popular estimation Gaelic is an unmelodious language. But if you stand on the top of Spiegen or Ben Tharsin and listen to the names of the hills round, you will see that some of them are full of music. Auchnashellach and Strathconan and Glencalvie, Corriemoullie and Strathvaich, Strathrannoch and Inchbae, Deanich and Alladale, Benmore and Ben Wyvis, Diebidale and Dundonnell, Fannich and Inverlael, Gildermorie and Kinlochluichart and Rhidorroch, Torridon and Affaric, Glenstrathfarrar and Glencannich,—all these are the names of deer-forests; and all these forests and many more can be seen on a clear day from any of the high hills in Monar by slowly turning round.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### AT FOUR-MILE RANGE

It was a bright sunny morning, with a gentle breeze driving large white fleecy clouds across the sky, and the moving shadows rolling up the mountains and across the moor made a perfect picture of a wild landscape.

Lazily I went to the window looking south to see more of the view, and as I threw it open to get a better look-out, the shadows rolled off stag-famed Ben y Vricht, and a flood of most brilliant sunshine illumined its face; from the very summit of the rocky and precipitous crest right down to the more gentle slopes of the heather-clad base. So very sharp and clear did it seem to stand out, that although four miles away, I turned to the mantelpiece to reach down a spy-glass, remarking, “It is so very bright that, in spite of the distance, one might see deer if they were there”. “No,” said my host, “it is too far, except by any chance there were a hundred of them

together, and they were moving." However, kneeling down, and resting the glass on the window-sill, it was brought to a focus, and lo and behold! there actually, as if by magic, were quite a hundred deer, trotting in a mass across a bright green strip of grass.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### SPRING IN THE HIGH TOPS

In the glen the heat was intense, and Allt na Beinne-Moire was in full flood with the melting of the snows. All around was the aroma from many pines and birches, so that it was a pleasure to pass through the woodlands filled with the young growth of springtide. Two capercaillie rose at my feet, and redstarts flitted from tree to tree as I passed. Spring had been backward, but she came at length to the hills in the form of full Summer, and it was not long ere the snows had gone, and in their stead the high tops were clothed with green hill grasses and tinged with the flowers of many plants of the creeping azalea and the cushion pink.

*Wanderings of a Naturalist.* SETON GORDON

### BALLADE OF THE FOREST IN SUMMER

Fra Cruachan tae Aberdeen  
The hinds'll move their calves soon  
Up frae the bracken's bonnie green  
To yon blue heights that float aboon;  
Nae snaws the tops an' corries croon;  
Crag whaur the eagle lifts his kills  
Blink i' the gowden efternoon;  
It's summer noo in a' the hills!

The heather sleeps frae morn till e'en  
Braw in her reed-an'-purple goon;  
Sax weeks it wants or stags be clean  
An' gang wi' thickenin' manes an' broun  
Waitin' the cauld October moon  
When a' the roarin' brae-face fills—  
Ye've heard yon wild, wanchancy tune?  
It's summer noo in a' the hills!

Yet blows a soupin' breeze an' keen;  
We've wearit for it whiles in toun,  
An' I wad be whaur I hae been  
In Autumn's blast or heats o' June  
Up on the quiet forest groun',  
Friens wi' the sun, or shoor that chills,  
Watchin' the beasts gang up an' doon;  
It's summer noo in a' the hills!

### *Envoy*

Mountains o' deer, ye ca' a loon  
Fra streets an' sic-like stoury ills  
Wi' thankfu' heart an' easy shoon;  
It's summer noo in a' the hills!

*Green Days and Blue Days.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

### *BRUAR LODGE*

By the favour of the lord of the forest, Bruar Lodge was his occasional domicile. With all its apertures he loved it dearly; and it may be doubted whether any monarch ever entered a palace, or any lady a ball-room, with more absolute delight than he was wont to enter this lonely abode. What though the winds would revel freely in it, and heave up the little carpet



with an unceasing undulation, still the table-cloth was tolerably tranquil, for the weight of the meal made it retain its station! What though the parlour bell in the passage would ring incessantly during the night, even when the doors were closed, stimulated by the gentle violence of the wind; it was an Æolian harp to him! What though a deluge of continuous rain, like the bursting of a waterspout, would sometimes plunge down, and darken the narrow glen, recalling the days of Deucalion and Pyrrha, still there was a to-morrow, and then the mist would climb the mountain tops, and the sun break forth anew in all its refulgence!

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE OLD HILL-MAN REMEMBERS

I hear the steps of the hunter!  
His whistling dart—his dog upon the hill.  
The joy of youth returns to my cheek  
At the sound of the coming chase!

My strength returns at the sounds of the wood;  
The cry of the hounds—the thrill of strings.  
Hark! the death-shout—"The deer has fallen!"  
Springs to life on the hill!

I see the bounding dog,  
My companion on the heath;  
The beloved hill of our chase,  
The echoing craig of woods.

I see the sheltering cave  
Which often received us from the night,  
When the glowing tree and the joyful cup  
Revived us with their cheer.

Glad was the smoking feast of deer,  
Our drink was from Loch Treig, our music its hum of waves;  
Though ghosts shrieked on the echoing hills,  
Sweet was our rest in the cave.

I see the mighty mountain,  
Chief of a thousand hills;  
The dream of deer is in its locks,  
Its head is the bed of clouds.

I see the ridge of hinds, the steep of the sloping glen,  
The wood of cuckoos at its foot,  
The blue height of a thousand pines,  
Of wolves, and roes, and elks.

Like the breeze on the lake of firs  
The little ducks skim on the pool,  
At its head is the strath of pines,  
The red rowan bends on its bank.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE BLACK WIND

A day of the black wind I recall. In Skye the sun shone brightly, but over Harris a great cloud, dark and ominous, floated throughout the day. Backwards and forwards this cloud drifted idly, and from it torrential rain descended. The Minch was pale green, and Fladda, with purple bloom upon it, was outlined against the storm.

On the far northern horizon white streaks of snow fell seaward, and when a shaft of sunlight shone diagonally upon those lines of snow the Cross of Saint Andrew was suddenly

formed, as it appeared to Achaius, King of Scots, and Hungus, King of Picts, on the eve of their great battle with Athelstan of England. At the base of the cross a fragment of rainbow burned mistily upon seas that were oppressed by the vast cloud canopy that hung above them. West and north the sky was so dark that it was a relief to look southward, for in that direction magnificent cumulus clouds towered into the blue of the sky.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### THUNDER IN THE FOREST

The sky had now brightened, and it seemed as though the thunder had gone, but as we crossed the plateau below Loch nan Cnapan (the Loch of the Knolls) the skies once more became gloomy, rain commenced to fall, and soon changed into large lumps of half-melted ice. These lumps were jagged, and not rounded as hailstones; perhaps they had been partially melted in the heated air during their rapid descent. In a few moments the plateau was almost white. Suddenly the gloom was rent by a blinding flash of jagged forked lightning, and in a couple of seconds the thunder crashed more deafeningly than I have ever before heard it. In great echoes from hill to hill it rolled, and at once the plateau was alive with the flutter of white wings as ptarmigan rose all around us and flew this way and that in great terror and confusion. My collie dog Dileas, already depressed by the gloom and falling ice, on the clap of thunder staggered forward as though shot; she was henceforth the most miserable object. And yet on the sky-line a herd of stags continued calmly to feed!

The downpour gradually lessened, and suddenly to the westward Ben Alder and Ben Lawers could be seen in clear sunshine. From the top of Coire Dhondail one looked into a seething cauldron of mist—swirling eddying mist—and torren-

tial rain through which the lightning flickered. Loch Eanaich was almost immediately beneath us, yet was invisible in the storm. Gradually the clouds lifted, and the loch, and the dark precipices of Sgoran Dubh behind it, showed dimly. The face of Sgoran Dubh an hour previous had been waterless; now innumerable burns foamed milky here as they rushed impetuously to the loch below. Such a scene of magnificent grandeur one may see but once in a lifetime; once seen, it is treasured as a priceless gift of the high hills.

*The Cairngorm Hills of Scotland.* SETON GORDON

### LOCH TORRIDON

All night long, in the world of sleep,  
Skies and waters were soft and deep:  
Shadow clothed them, and silence made  
Soundless music of dream and shade:  
All above us, the livelong night,  
Shadow, kindled with sense of light;  
All around us, the brief night long,  
Silence laden with sense of song.  
Stars and mountains without, we knew,  
Watched and waited, the soft night through:  
All unseen, but divined and dear,  
Thrilled the touch of the sea's breath near:  
All unheard, but alive like sound,  
Throbbled the sense of the sea's life round;  
Round us, near us, in depth and height,  
Soft as darkness and keen as light.

And the dawn leapt in at my casement: and there, as I rose, at  
my feet  
No waves of the landlocked waters, no lake submissive and  
sweet,

Soft slave of the lordly seasons, whose breath may loose it or  
freeze;  
But to left and to right and ahead was the ripple whose pulse  
is the sea's.  
From the gorge we had travelled by starlight the sunrise,  
winged and aflame,  
Shone large on the live wide wavelets that shuddered with joy  
as it came;  
As it came and caressed and possessed them, till panting and  
laughing with light  
From mountain to mountain the water was kindled and stung  
to delight.  
And the grey gaunt heights that embraced and constrained and  
compelled it were glad,  
And the rampart of rock, stark naked, that thwarted and  
barred it, was clad  
With a stern grey splendour of sunrise: and scarce had I sprung  
to the sea  
When the dawn and the water were wedded, the hills and the  
sky set free.  
The chain of the night was broken: the waves that embraced  
me and smiled  
And flickered and fawned in the sunlight, alive, unafraid, un-  
defiled,  
Were sweeter to swim in than air, though fulfilled with the  
mounting morn,  
Could be for the birds whose triumph rejoiced that a day was  
born.  
And a day was arisen indeed for us. Years and the changes of  
years  
Clothed round with their joys and their sorrows, and dead as  
their hopes and their fears,  
Lie noteless and nameless, unlit by remembrance or record of  
days

Worth wonder or memory, or cursing or blessing, or passion  
or praise,  
Between us who live and forget not, but yearn with delight  
in it yet,  
And the day we forget not, and never may live and may think  
to forget.  
And the years that were kindlier and fairer, and kindled with  
pleasures as keen,  
Have eclipsed not with lights or with shadows the light on the  
face of it seen.  
For softly and surely, as nearer the boat that we gazed from  
drew,  
The face of the precipice opened and bade us as birds pass  
through,  
And the bark shot sheer to the sea through the strait of the  
sharp steep cleft,  
The portal that opens with imminent rampires to right and to  
left,  
Sublime as the sky they darken and strange as a spell-struck  
dream,  
On the world unconfined of the mountains, the reign of the  
sea supreme,  
The kingdom of westward waters, wherein when we swam  
we knew  
The waves that we clove were boundless, the wind on our  
brows that blew  
Had swept no land and no lake, and had warred not on tower  
or on tree,  
But came on us hard out of heaven, and alive with the soul of  
the sea.

A. C. SWINBURNE

## IN MONAR

It is long since the old chief Tomas climbed down from his seat on the shoulder of Ben Tharsin at the head of Strathmore. I should like to know if his last day's sport there was a good one; if things went well with him, and his long-legged dogs pulled down their quarry. And dearly should I have liked to climb up the steep green side of Sgurr na Conbhaire (the hill of the merry dogs), and, hiding behind some big grey stone, watch in the "Bowman's Pass" and see what sort of work those keen old hunters did with their queer weapons. More is it likely that it is *we* who are watched, and that the spirits of those ancient inhabitants of the mountains follow *us* over the ground they once knew so well. Who shall say that when some curious twist carries the fairly blowing wind to the deer, or when a grey shroud of mist settles down on the hills, blotting them out, and making useless the keenest glass, that it is not Tomas and his clan stretching out the arms of protection to their old friends on the hills? And when a bullet goes aside, when it just misses the stag, and sings mournfully into the black glen two thousand feet below, who shall say that it is always the holder of the rifle who is to blame?

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

## THE LIFTING OF THE MIST

The everlasting mist still rolls on, and although slightly ascending at times, it gives a glimpse of the dripping heather, yet another and another volume drives along, each pressing on like the waves of a troubled sea. But behold a broad white light expanding in the heavens. It is the path of the glorious sun wading in the dim expanse, and struggling with the vapour. Now it fades away, and hope dies with it—dark—

dark—dark. Oh, that some blast would sweep across the moor, and scatter these lazy volumes to the four corners of the earth!

But it will clear! I see it is clearing. Mark how the mist is gathering together, and forming in more compact masses. By heavens, it rises! How beautifully it climbs the silvery heights of Ben-y-venie! See how it courses before the sun, and how blue it is getting to the leeward!

“Shake the dew drops from your flanks, Peter; we shall start in ten minutes.”

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### SUNSET ON ARKAIG

You are standing on the lofty ridge rising from the south shore of the loch. The sun has just dipped below the mountains to the west, shrouding all the slopes of Arkaig with the deep shadows of coming night, while with his last rays he bathes the whole length of the northern slopes and mountain peaks opposite to you, as far as you can see, in a glory of pure vermilion. Far below you lies the forest primeval of mighty fir, oak, and birch, looking dark and mysterious in the mists of evening. Grim skeletons of the great departed fathers of the wood, bleached by the storms of ages, stretch out their fantastic arms, and seem like ghosts in the deepening shadows. The silhouette of the mountain tops above, and the dim, mysterious woods below, are reflected into the unruffled bays of the loch beneath you; these bays here and there are spangled by horizontal silver threads, marking where the point of some spur or headland thrusts itself into the loch, and sometimes a silver ring will, for a moment, illumine the surrounding gloom, as some lusty trout makes his bold dash at the evening moth.

But if you are in luck, and you are late in leaving your ground, you may see another beautiful effect on Arkaig; for



even as you are looking and enjoying the beauty of the scene I have so vainly tried to describe, but which no words can do justice to, and which no paint could render, you will see the scarlet drapery of the distant hills gradually fading away, and as the last rays of the sun sink lower and lower, the shades of evening rise from the loch below, and envelop all the lower slopes of the mountains opposite. At length nothing remains but the rose-red tips of the highest peaks on which the sun-god lingers for a moment with one last kiss ere he sinks into the arms of night, and "leaves the world to darkness and to me". The heavens are of that glorious green colour we sometimes see in the Highlands at this season of the year—true twilight—and then, as Longfellow sings:

Presently one by one in the infinite meadows of heaven  
Blossom the lonely stars, the Forget-me-nots of the Angels.

*Deer-Stalking.* II. II. CREALOCK

### IN REPLY TO AN INVITATION

"Come now! The forest's full of deer,"  
You write. I see the morning mist  
Draw up the hillsides, leaving clear  
Mountains of blue and amethyst;  
The narrow pony-track that winds  
Through passes where I long to go;  
The stags among the watchful hinds,  
The lonely corries touched with snow;  
Each brawling burn, each glen, each height,  
Each fringe of birch and rowan wood:  
"The forest's full of deer," you write,  
And "Come at once!" Ah, if I could!

*Game-Bag and Creel.* W. G. M. DOBIE

## ONCE IN PARIS

Cluny gave the Prince an account of his stewardship. Charles nodded listlessly. "It does not matter, *mon ami*. Does anything matter?" he asked at last.

They sat in silence, two lives broken on the wheel of fate, the thoughts of both alike straying to the country where each had first seen the other's face. Suddenly the Prince said, "It is September. The rowans should be red in Lochaber." He crouched a long time, staring vacantly. "*Hé*, Scotland, Scotland!" he whispered.

*King of the Highland Hearts.* WINIFRED DUKE



# THE FOREST

## II. THE DEER



*The dun brothers of my lonely day.*

J. S. STUART

*Oh, the wafts of heather honey and the music of the brae  
Where I watched the great harts feeding, nearer, nearer all the day.*

CHARLES KINGSLEY

*Come, I'll show you the red deer a-roving!*

"LIZZIE LINDSAY"



# THE FOREST

## II. THE DEER

### *AN EPITAPH*

THOSE who love the deer are heirs to a goodly heritage. In a Highland churchyard there is an epitaph which reads as follows: "He was a true friend, a sincere Christian and the best deer-stalker in Lochaber". The shade of many a greater man might have been satisfied with a lesser memorial!

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### *THE ARISTOCRATS*

It is pleasant to sit alone towards sunset of a summer's evening on some rocky spur that overhangs the secluded glen, and watch the stags draw down from the high hill-face to their accustomed pasture in the strath below. They come leisurely enough, in twos and threes, perhaps a score of them, feeding as they move, yet moving all the time. No sound falls upon their nervous ears save the familiar plash of brawling streams; no strange scent taints the delicious odour of young grass and budding heather which fills their expanding nostrils. At this hour of peace the eye may rest at will upon their spreading antlers, their glorious colour, their majestic motion. And while the last light fades on the slopes, and the shadows deepen in the corries, it is pleasant to remember that these deer are of a race as old as the hills. They are the lineal descendants of the

great European stags that crossed the dry floor of the North Sea when the ice sheet rolled from Britain, and possessed the old Caledonian forest, in company with the wolf and the boar, the bear and the beaver, the white bulls, and the Stone men. The march of civilisation has destroyed their forests, ploughed their pastures, circumscribed their bounds, and made them a lesser race than their mighty ancestors; but their pedigree is none the less unimpeachable, and the successful sportsman spills the blue blood of prehistoric times.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE PICK OF THE FOREST

You are looking at the most splendid view of its kind, hill and glen and water, that you have ever seen. The curve of the hill below you is a great green cup, with the far side broken out of it to show you other slopes and ridges and smaller cups, and many miles away the water of a loch shining in the sun, and beyond that, peak after peak of fainter and fainter blue. And for the moment you get a sense of vast, empty space—though the stalker is looking intently, slowly, this way and that. And then—I wish it may come to you the first time, that wonderful knowledge, as it did to me—you suddenly realise that the whole landscape below you is dotted with deer, light brown, tiny bodies of deer, some of them moving, some of them still. That is one of the great herds, there on the green floor far away. This is the finest corrie in all the glen.

*English Wild Life.* ERIC PARKER

### TERMS OF THE FOREST

Before deer are one year old they are called (male and female) *Calves*; after one year old the male is termed a *Brocket*;

at three, a *Spire*; at four, a *Staggart*; at five, a *Stag*; and at six, a *warrantable Stag*. He may afterwards be called a *Hart*. The female, after one year old, is termed a *Hearst*; and at three years old a *Hind*.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### FIRST-CLASS HEADS

What are the necessary and essential characteristics of a first-class head?

First of all it must have length. That is, it must, at any rate, have a length of horn of at least 34 inches. Combined with length the horn should be thick and rough, the points must be long and sharp, and the span—or inside measurement between the main beams—must be wide. Measurements are, of course, the chief factors in deciding between the rival merits of different heads. All good heads will measure well, but some good measurements divorced from other qualifications do not make a trophy first class. Nor do they take into account the infinitesimal curves and gradations of horns which are so important. Beauty of form is, in my opinion, second only to length in judging a head, and it is this very factor which makes it impossible that there ever—or only in very exceptional years—can be such a thing as “*the best head of the season*”.

Measurements are the only real test as to whether a head is “good”. Many a time one hears, “So-and-So killed a very good head in such-and-such a forest”. The head may be good according to local standards, but many stalkers take a very short-sighted view of such matters, and the famous head, when seen, turns out to be a very ordinary affair. If one hears that a head, say, 32 inches long, with a beam of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and a span of 26, has been killed, it is possible to form some sort of idea of its class. For this reason I would urge owners and lessees of forests



to impress the importance of measurements on their stalkers. Such measurements are quite easy to take, three only being really necessary. It is best to use a steel tape, as it does not stretch or shrink. The three important measurements are:

*Length.* From the lower edge of the coronet or burr at the base of the horn, over its edge and along the outside curve of the horn to its longest point tip.

*Beam.* The circumference of the horn at its thinnest part between the bay and tray—that is, the second and third—points. If the bay is absent, between the brow and tray.

*Span.* The greatest width between the main beams in a straight line.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

## IF

If every stag were left to attain his six years it is still very doubtful if they would *all* become royals. In English parks those so left usually do show the twelve points at that age, but with the wild red deer there is nothing certain known on the subject. The most experienced foresters differ on the matter, many maintaining that a certain number of stags are “born royals” and will attain to that honour if left to live long enough, while others, even if spared for eight or ten years, will never arrive at the dignity: be this as it may, there cannot be a doubt that every four-year-old stag, spared for another two years, will have a much heavier body and finer and larger horns than if killed earlier. In some parts of the Highlands, so great is the admiration of the foresters for a royal, that they will approach the dead monarch with uncovered heads!

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

*THE BEST BEASTS*

One stag, I suppose, is very much like another to most people; but a view at close quarters through a glass reveals almost as much character as may be seen in the faces of some people. One has a stupid, weak, silly look, with vacant, staring eyes, and a beast like this usually carries a light skin. Another, with his dark red coat, clean muscular body, slender legs, and full, melting eye, seems the personification of activity and beauty; for it may be taken as a general rule that the dark-coated stags are the best, especially if they have a well-defined black line down the middle of the back.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

*CLUB LIFE*

A stag grazing has a distinctive character of its own, due to the fact that his face, instead of being bent down at an angle to the basal axis of the skull, as in the case of the sheep and the ox, is prolonged almost in line with it. This brings his head vertically to the ground line in grazing, and as he pulls the grass towards him his antlers are thrown forward with bold and picturesque effect. Deer are by nature dainty feeders. They do not bite closely upon a limited space like sheep, nor tear coarse herbage with the aid of a pliant tongue like cattle, but pick here and there, nipping the tender tops of plants that suit them, and moving forward all the time to fresh places. A band of stags is always under organised guidance (whether of the oldest or the heaviest stag cannot be determined), which decides the direction in which they are to go, and, on occasion, the order in which they are to feed. Perfect harmony prevails. The writer once watched a band of fifteen stags feed up the green bed of a mountain torrent between steep banks, which

caused the deer perforce to move in single file; yet the rear stags made no attempt to pass those in front, and the hindmost deer seemed quite content to take the leavings of his fourteen brethren. Stags accustomed to feed together exhibit a strong sense of companionship, and it is a familiar fact that a stag is slow to leave a wounded companion with whom he has been wont to share his bed and board.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### WHEN A STAG IS CLEAN

When a stag is "clean" he is in his prime condition. A good, strong, well-nourished horn should be quite rough, looking like the shell of a walnut; it is rougher at its base than higher up the beam, the roughness representing where the canals and blood-vessels ran while nourishing the horn during its formation. When poor and starving, the stag has lost his "head", and while the new horns were growing he has been in a ceaseless state of suffering, tenderness, and inflammation; then, when the new horn has developed, the drying of the velvet has constantly caused him worry and irritation, and he is pestered by insects; but when he is clean at last, he becomes fat, sleek, and comfortable from the warmer weather and good nourishing spring and summer grass. He now leaves the stuffy, close fir-woods or sheltered glens and the old rank grass, overrun and soiled by hinds and their nurseries, where he has had to drag out a wretched existence during the bitter winter months, and, associating with stags only, he roams off to the highest hill-tops, where the grass is young and sweet. Here the flies and midges are less tormenting than below, and the air is cool and fresh. Or, if a grand old stag, he may go off alone, or perhaps with his little toady stag, and hide himself in some lofty and secure retreat, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest", far away up in the wildest cloud-capped



THE DAY OF THE ROARING



peaks of the mountain-tops, lying close all day, and only coming out of his stronghold at night, when none can see him. Then he feeds on the hillside, and waters himself, using his client the toady as a watch-dog. But, poor fellow, this dignified repose is not for long; his very condition and robust health begin to produce the effects intended by nature, as the season now approaches when he has to carry out the mandate "to increase and multiply".

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### THE RUT

The 20th of September is called in Gaelic "The day of the Roaring", for on that day the rutting season is supposed to commence.

*Badminton Library.* LORD LOVAT

### A VICTIM OF THE TENDER PASSION

The first evidence of the rut is the stag's desire for female society; and fine stags which have not been seen before that season, or, if seen, were keeping company with stags only, may now be observed consorting with hinds. The first change in the stag's appearance is that the glands of his throat and his neck begin to swell and thicken, the hair grows long, coarse, and bristling; he becomes restless. If he has not his hinds close at hand, or has been driven out by a stag stronger than himself, he will travel away, if he can, long distances in search of hinds. He becomes quarrelsome with other stags, and will not go with them. He is constantly rolling in bogs, and all this rapidly increases, especially if the weather should grow frosty and wild, till at last he becomes a savage beast, bellowing and roaring in the dominance of his animal lust. His passions take away all appetite for food, and he is never quiet anywhere for five minutes together, but goes running with a succession of

grunts from one hind to another, driving them here, chasing them there, in his insane jealousy and anxiety to move them from the neighbourhood of any other stag, then rushing off, bellowing, full gallop after any outside stag which may have approached the ladies of his harem; that accomplished, he bolts off in another direction after another stag which may have tried to "cut in" while he was chasing the first; and so it goes on—it is ceaseless. He gets little or no sleep, little or next to nothing to eat, so that this great, fat, sleek fellow of yesterday will, in a week or ten days, have become a bag of bones, tucked up and as herring-gutted as any greyhound. His shining, sleek coat will have become dishevelled, ragged, bog-stained, and filthy. His trim, slender neck will have become swollen, and looking as thick as his body, his sweet cow-like odour will have disappeared, and he will smell like an ibex. But this is the time to note the wild animal obeying his strange instincts, ruled by his wild passions, and carrying out the dictates of nature. Nothing can be more interesting to the lover of natural history. A big black "Royal" you may have observed lording it over the district for several days, eloping with all the matrons and maidens one after the other, forcing them to join his harem *nolens volens*, while their lords have either had to fight a duel in self-defence and for wounded honour, or bolt for their bare lives, and then have to content themselves with hanging about on the outskirts of this Highland society on the chance of a turn of luck in their favour. When this Blue Beard has enjoyed himself to the top of his bent, and a reign of terror has been established in his domestic circle, weary with his ceaseless exercise, his scanty food, and the violence of his animal passions, he may have laid down to recruit exhausted nature. Suddenly a tremendous roar is heard close by, and soon after appears another big stag over a neighbouring skyline. He has scented the battle from afar, or maybe he has been beaten and driven out from his own hinds by a bigger

stag, and here, perhaps, he hopes to compensate himself. Up jumps the exhausted Mormon, and fairly howling with rage, makes for this new pretender to his marital throne. Then may ensue curious scenes. The bully and victor of many fights may in his turn be conquered by the interloper, and ignominiously driven out from his own herd, which the master stag then takes possession of, drilling it after his own fashion. As ladies proverbially admire the strongest and love variety, they quietly acquiesce in this change of lords. It may often happen, when the master stag, worn out with his exertions, has been snatching a few minutes of "troubled repose", that some favoured young suitor slips up quietly from behind a knobby close by, whence he has been anxiously watching for his chance, and urges his suit to some frisky matron with so much successful ardour, that she, looking round to see if old Blue Beard is still fast asleep, and finding all safe, assents to the seductions of her young lover, and off they skedaddle together, "over the hill and far away". After a little our master stag begins to be again alive to the pleasures of this life, and stretching his neck, wakes up. He looks round to see if his harem be all safe; at once he misses his favourite. Up he jumps with the roar of an angry bull, rushes to where she was, has the wind of the runaways in a minute, and off he goes full gallop in pursuit, making the moor and hills re-echo with his wrath. Now is the time; now the chance for the hangers-on and the toadies, which may have been seen on all the rising hillocks surrounding the herd. In they rush, without any false modesty or the least hesitation, where just before angels had feared to tread, and a general state of amorous scrimmage and laxity of propriety ensues, ending, as usual, in might being right, and the strongest succeeding to empire, until, at all events, the return home of the master stag, when there will be at once a general flight of all these mashers, and empire again be restored.



## TRAVELLING STAGS

The distance stags travel in a single night is surprising.

Perhaps the most remarkable journey of a stag is one for which I can personally vouch. A hind which had been hand-reared as a pet was presented to Miss Trotter of Mortonhall, and for many years grazed in a park close to the house within two miles of Edinburgh. When the hind was full grown a story was told that a stag had been seen in the park early one morning, but of this I was somewhat sceptical. Time went on, and my scepticism disappeared when I saw a calf in the park along with its mother. Where the stag came from will never of course be known, but the nearest place is Lord Ancaster's forest of Glenartney, a distance of about fifty miles as the crow flies. When we consider the fences, railways, canals, rivers, etc., he would have to encounter, and how he discovered the hind was there, we must regard this as one of those mysteries in nature upon which we can only speculate.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

## LOOKED IN THE MOUTH

The age of deer may be known from the manner of their feeding. A young deer "nibs" the grass closely, by a short, sharp upward cut of the fore-teeth; a middle-aged deer *pulls* it more gently; and an old deer, who has lost his teeth, does not touch the grass, but with his lips and gums plucks gently the tops of the long heath.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE TREAD OF DEER

If the impression of a deer's foot measures full two inches at the heel, he is warrantable; if three inches, and the hoofs mark deeply in the ground, allowing for its nature, he is a large, heavy, old deer. Such bring up their hind feet to the impression made by their fore ones.

The tread of a hind is much narrower and longer than that of the male, particularly at the toe, whilst the hart's is broad and round at that point, instead of being narrow.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### HOW A STAG SLEEPS

A stag dozing, while he chews the cud, rests with his head well up in the air, and is more or less alert to scents and sounds. When he has finished his cud and feels very sleepy, he stretches his head on the ground in front of him. When he feels perfectly secure, and able to indulge in a deep sleep, he lies curled up like a dog with his head turned to his tail. The writer and a friend, on a hill tramp, once found a stag in this position so sound asleep that it needed shouts to wake him.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### SWIMMING POWERS OF DEER

Hill deer take the sea fearlessly and swim strongly. Stags introduced to Hoy Island, Orkney, are said to have swum southwards to the coast of Caithness, and northwards as far as the Bay of Skail on the mainland of Orkney—in either case a distance, as the crow flies, of eight miles, swept by rapid tides. An Arran stag, brought to Jura, preferred to winter in Islay, and constantly crossed the Sound of Islay for a change of pasture.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### HEADS OR TAILS?

Thin beams, attenuated points, and aborted tines may unquestionably betoken a wasting stag, but unless confirmed by other age marks or by previous knowledge of the stag, they are not decisive on the hill, because the apparent symptoms of decline may be simulated in the normal head of a thriving deer. Many stags in splendid condition have unaccountably poor heads, whence the remark that in some deer feeding goes to heads and in others to haunches.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE BEST FIGHTERS

The stag with the best horns is generally not the best fighter and is frequently driven out by a switch-horn or "caberslach", whose long skewer-like antlers are the most effective horns for fighting. The best fighter of all is, however, the hummel—a stag which has no horns at all, and which is in consequence a very heavy beast.

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

### THE HORNS OF A STAG

That part of the skull from which the stag's horn grows is known as the "pillar"; the base of the horn which grows from the pillar is the "burr" or "pearls"; the "beam" is the total length of the main horn itself. The "points" or "tines" are those horns which branch from the beam at an angle. The young horns appear after six months, and are termed "bossets". At first they are two round buttons or knobs, covered by a hairy skin; the second year the horns themselves appear, but

only straight and single; third year, they may throw out two points, and if the regular development takes place, three points the fourth year; four points the fifth year; and before the sixth year is ended there may be six or seven tines on each horn, but no rule can be laid down on this subject. In old forest parlance in the South these tines are called—"the brow", the first point just above the burr; the "bae", the second point; the "tray", the third point. These tines are a stag's "rights", while the tines at the upper end of the beam are termed "croquets", or, if the main beam ends in a single point, it is spoken of as an "upright"; but these terms are not used in Scotland. A royal stag in Scotland is a stag of twelve points. To be counted a point a Scotch forester holds it should be long enough to hang a spy-glass on.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### A NIMBLE NOSE

I have sometimes, during the sixty years I have been a stalker, tried experiments as to the power of deer's sense of smell, and I am sure that I have started them, when there was a pretty strong wind, at the distance of three-quarters of a mile. The actual distance was not measured, but I guessed it at the long range I mention.

Horatio Ross's Introduction to  
*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

### A WHITE HART

White red deer are not very uncommon, and have always made a certain appeal to the imagination. In old days the appearance of a white hart was heralded with great pomp, and the whole Court took part in the chase, including ladies. The

lucky slayer had the privilege of choosing the most beautiful girl, and kissing the one on whom he had set his fancy. This custom, not unnaturally, led to so much jealousy and bad feeling that it had to be abandoned. Methods of hunting may change, but human nature never!

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE "HEAVIERS"

Ox-deer, or "heaviers", as the foresters call them (most likely a corruption from the French *hiver*), are wilder than either hart or hind. They often take post upon a height that affords a look-out all round, which makes them very difficult to stalk. Although not so good when December is past, still they are in season all the winter; hence their French designation.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### WOOD DEER

The habits of wood deer vary very considerably from those of the open hill, and if they are much less jealous, their vigilance, sagacity, and cunning abundantly compensate for any diminution of wildness, or permission of nearer approach. Among these there are always some old veterans; each of whom combines every trick, faculty, or endowment, divided among those of less experience. The younger, as on the hill, go in herds, but these old horned misanthropes live apart by themselves. These great harts, for they are always the largest of their race, frequent the deepest recesses of the woods, quaint ferny hollows, secret bushy dells, or broken ledges of rock covered with birch and pine, and up to their breasts in blaeberries or long heather. If disturbed on one of these from above,

they will drop down to the next, glide along the face under shelter of the shelf above, and disappear, as if they vanished like one of the cloud-formed shapes of Ossian, without a crack or a rustle; till suddenly—as you stand ready to “knock him over” when he shall rouse up from the rock under your feet—he appears on the other side of a glade or a green moss three or four hundred yards off. You think it must be another, and cautiously slide down the ledge, and drop on the next shelf, where you saw his horns peeping from the heather a few minutes before. Nothing is there but an empty bed. You think it *might* have been the next line—but no—there is only that one dry deep lair, and as you look upon it, the heather at its edge slowly rises from his recent pressure, and if you lay your hand on the dry pine needles in its hollow, they are yet warm—he *was* there two minutes before, and is *now* half a mile off, going over the shoulder of the “Sgòr”, or through the far deep “glac”.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

## SANCTUARY

Among the extraordinary habits of deer in Scotland, those of the forest of Tarnaway were remarkable. The great harts of this deep solitude were of that mighty race which went and came between its woods and the wild wilderness of the Monadh-liath, and which, having this vast range, and undisturbed range of mountain and covert, enjoyed the best resources for all seasons; and hence were the largest deer in Scotland. One of their favourite haunts was the great craig of the Ledanreich. In the face of this rock—a sheer precipice eighty or ninety feet high—there are tiers of extraordinary galleries, formed by the wasting of the softer parts of the

yellow sandstone, between the ledges of the strata, over which grows a deep veil of ivy hanging from shelf to shelf, and forming between each a close dim corridor in the rock, screened from the hottest sun, and cooled by the air of the river which runs below. In these cavities both the stags and the roe retreated from the heat of the day, and the stir of the waking world, and as the sun declined, they stole out on the dewy banks, and quiet lawns, to feed in security. In the same mysterious passages which gave concealment and escape to the stags and bucks, the does were used to lay with their kids, and from thence at morning and evening they brought them out to pluck the tender grass upon the green banks beyond. Often from the brow above, or from behind the ivy screen, we have watched their "red garment" stealing through the boughs, followed by their little pair drawing their slender legs daintily through the wet dew, and turning their large velvet ears to catch every passing sound upon the breeze as it brought the hum of the water, or the crow of the distant cock, now trotting before, now lingering behind their dam, now nestling together, now starting off as the gale suddenly rustled the leaves behind them—then listening and re-uniting in a timorous plump, pricking their ears, and bobbing their little black noses in the wind—then, as the doe dropped on her knees in the moss, and laid her side on the warm spot where the morning sun glanced in through the branches, they gambolled about her, leaping over her back, and running round in little circles, uttering that soft, wild, plaintive cry like the treble note of an accordion, till, weary of their sport, they lay down at her side, and slept while she watched as only a mother can. No marvel it was that they loved that safe and fair retreat, with all its songs and flowers, its plenty and repose.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

*THE LITTLE FUNKER*

Sometimes an old stag takes compassion on a youngster. The writer saw a pretty instance of this on the West coast in the season of 1885. Three stags had been moved in a young plantation. The two best jumped the three-feet wire fence; the third, a two-year-old stag, got frightened and refused. The two waited for him some time, while he walked and ran up and down; at last the larger of the two—a good royal—came back to the fence. The little one ran towards him, the royal trotted away; but no, the little one could not make up his mind to jump. Back came the royal over the fence, went close up to the little fellow, and actually *kissed him* several times. With the glass, not 500 yards off, we could see them rub their noses together. Then the royal led down to the fence and jumped it, but still the little stag would not have it. At last the royal tossed his head in the air; we could almost hear him say, "Well, you are a fool!" and away he went up the hill to join his other companions.

When out of sight, the little one took courage, got over with a scramble, and followed.

*Badminton Library. LORD LOVAT*

*THE MASTER STAG*

It is to be noted, that on the hillside the largest harts lie at the bottom of the parcel, and the smaller ones above; indeed, these fine fellows seem to think themselves privileged to enjoy their ease, and impose the duty of keeping guard upon the hinds and upon their juniors. In the performance of this task, the hinds are always the most vigilant, and when deer are driven, they almost always take the lead. When, however, the herd is strongly beset on all sides, and great boldness and



decision are required, you shall see the master hart come forward courageously, like a great leader as he is, and, with his confiding band, force his way through all obstacles.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### A CHAMPION

It is grand on a still evening, when the foggy atmosphere presages a coming frost, to listen to the answering challenge of the big stags at some familiar battle-ground. There is nothing of the bullock about them now. They roar like lions, ending each prolonged roar with a succession of deep coughs, instinct with the fury of battle. The earth vibrates with the sound as it passes and returns from corrie to corrie. The best stags fight furiously.

Fighting stags, like fighting men, differ in temperamental grit, and sometimes a deer of lesser calibre will conquer by the indomitable energy of his attack. A stag of this class in Jura killed the biggest stag on his beat, and broke an antler in the process; then he thrashed an imported Arran stag that looked heavier than himself; and when the stalker on the beat came up the following day to skin the dead beast, the victor stood on a hillock near by and roared continuously.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE LORD OF THE SIXTY HINDS

"Hark! what is that?" said I, as a hollow roar like an angry bull was heard not far from us. "Kep down, kep down," said Donald, suiting the action to the word, and pressing me down with his hand; "it's just a big staig." All the hinds looked up, and, following the direction of their heads, we saw an immense hart coming over the brow of the hill three hundred yards

from us. He might easily have seen us, but seemed too intent on the hinds to think of anything else. On the height of the hill he halted, and stretching out his neck and lowering his head, bellowed again. He then rushed down the hill like a mad beast; when half-way down he was answered from a distance by another stag. He instantly halted, and looking in that direction roared repeatedly, while we could see in the evening air, which had become cold and frosty, his breath coming out of his nostrils like smoke. Presently he was answered by another and another stag, and the whole distance seemed alive with them. A more unearthly noise I never heard, as it echoed and re-echoed through the rocky glens that surrounded us.

The setting sun threw a strong light on the first comer, casting a kind of yellow glare on his horns and head, while his body was in deep shade, giving him a most singular appearance, particularly when combined with his hoarse and strange bellowing. As the evening closed in, their cries became almost incessant, while here and there we heard the clash of horns as two rival stags met and fought a few rounds together. None, however, seemed inclined to try their strength with the large hart who had first appeared. The last time we saw him, in the gloom of the evening, he was rolling in a small pool of water, with several of the hinds standing quietly round him, while the smaller stags kept passing to and fro near the hinds, but afraid to approach too close to their watchful rival, who was always ready to jump up and dash at any of them who ventured within a certain distance of his seraglio. "Donald," I whispered, "I would not have lost this sight for a hundred pounds." "'Deed, no, it's grand," said he. "In all my travels on the hill I never saw the like." Indeed it is very seldom that chances combine to enable a deer-stalker to look on quietly at such a strange meeting of deer as we had witnessed that evening.

*Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands.* CHARLES ST. JOHN

### “THAT FAWN THAT FOLLOWS”

If you find a young fawn that has never followed its dam, and take it up and rub its back, and put your fingers in its mouth, it will follow you home for several miles; but if it has once followed its dam for ever so small a space before you found it, it will never follow human beings.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE BATHER

I was spying a distant hillside one day in August, when some bright object flashing in the sun caught my eye, and the glass revealed a stag. He was standing shaking himself by the edge of one of these pools, the water flying off him in all directions. It was the sun flashing on this which had attracted my attention.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### “THE STANDARD ON THE BRAES O’ MAR”

About a quarter of a century ago I heard and read a good deal of the power of music over deer; nowadays stalkers seem to be independent of the bagpipes! The late Donald Stewart, forester and head stalker to Queen Victoria, told me that he had whistled tunes to the deer till he was tired, they listening within twenty yards. He mentioned a noted Glenisla poacher who on occasion thus took advantage of the deer; he whistled a tune, walking on the while, the stag standing admiringly and so an easy victim. An amusing incident at a Braemar Gathering nearly a century ago was also recalled by Stewart. The then tenant of one of the Braemar hotels had two tame young stags, which he had received when only a few days old, tethered

in a park. On the occasion of the games that year the Fife clansmen, headed by two pipers, marched through the village. The strains of the bagpipes were too much for the imprisoned deer; they broke loose and walked alongside the pipers.

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHE

### THE STONE

Said a lady to a stalker as they were nearing the spying point, "Look, Donald, surely that's a beast!"

The stalker solemnly regarded the object indicated and observed, "It is a stane, your leddyship."

She, however, continued to assert that she was sure it was a stag, going so far as to remark that she had seen it move.

"It is a stane," responded the stalker.

"Wait, Donald; I'm sure I saw it move. I'll have a look through the glass," which she proceeded to do. "Yes, you're quite right, Donald; it is a stone," she said, being at last convinced.

"Aye!" said her companion dryly, "I kened fine it was a stane," finishing with the crushing remark, "It is the same stane you was thinking was a deer in 1922, and in 1921, and in 1920!"

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE



# THE FOREST

## III. VILLAINOUS SALTPETRE



*Upon thy belly shalt thou go.*

GENESIS

*Man stalks by faith and not by sight.*

SIR OWEN SEAMAN

Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum!  
*Here crawl I where the hill showers hum  
Out of the burn and into the hag  
All to shoot at a master stag;  
There, he's taken his ounce of lead,  
Winces, sinks to the hillside dead;  
Twenty stone and a royal head.*

THE SONG OF FEE, FO, FUM



# THE FOREST

## III. VILLAINOUS SALTPETRE

### *KILLING AT THE STALK*

STALKING, or, as it was called in olden hunting—"killing at the stalk"—is stealing up to the deer when they are lying or feeding, and is that part of deer-hunting which requires the greatest skill, experience, and judgment. The use of the rifle is a subordinate art: for it is of no purpose to shoot well, if the hunter does not know where to look for, or how to approach, the deer.

*Lays of the Deer Forest, Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### *THE ROYAL*

The waves of purple foamed about his knees  
As when some ship, anchored against the tide,  
Stands fast and flings the dark on-coming seas  
With easy mastery to either side.

He fell. The sunset turned the hill to blood.  
His heavy antlers leaned like broken spars.  
His great bulk lying lonely in the flood  
Laid bare its wreckage to the pitying stars.

*Over the Grass.* WILL. H. OGILVIE



### DEER-DRIVING

This is an unfortunate combination of words to describe moving deer towards the shooters. It has led to the "Driving deer into a narrow place where they have no escape" style of abuse of those who indulge in this form of sport. If the writers of such nonsense tried themselves to *drive* deer, they would find how impossible it is. Deer will not be *driven*; if they think they are being forced they will break back, however thick the beaters are.

The only way to force deer up to the "guns" is to make them think you want them to go in the opposite direction.

Instead of being called Deer-Driving it ought to be called (coining a word in the German manner) Deceiving-deer-into-going-where-you-want-them-to.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### THE WIND

The formation of the different parts of the earth, especially of the mountains, is so vast and various, with peaks, corners, corries, and gullies—each of which, differing from every other in some detail, and each detail, whether great or small, having its own effect upon the action of the wind—that any attempt at directions in several cases would be as likely to mislead as to assist the young stalker. Instances of the truth of this remark may be seen in high hills on a stormy day, when, in some of the circular-shaped corries not seldom formed round the upper part of rocks and peaks, with the wind blowing over the top, the mist may be seen driving through them, like water in a boiling cauldron.

*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

*THE PROCESSION*

It is, I think, Sir Emerson Tennant who writes—"Whenever I miss I feel like a funeral procession, of which I am the corpse, and the forester, gillie, and pony-man the pall-bearers, and each will be glad to be rid of me before they can again enjoy themselves".

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

*THE SURGEON OF THE DEER FOREST*

"In the Forest and on the moor there is a mighty Doctor before whom the greatest physicians and surgeons in the world must bow down. Nature acting in a pure air on an absolutely healthy subject will work wonderful cures. It seems marvellous that the broken leg of an animal so restless as a stag should heal, but it is the case. Such a wound will heal and the animal ultimately be little the worse for it."

Every good sportsman is, of course, greatly distressed if he has the misfortune to wound a stag without being able to kill him. No matter what care may be exercised, it is impossible, even for the best of shots, who has been accustomed to stalk for many years, not to experience some time or other a catastrophe of this kind. It is at any rate some slight consolation to know that Nature can effect the marvellous cures of which there is authentic record.

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

*FAILURE AND SUCCESS*

Apart from the proper consummation of the stalk, there are other reasons why it is highly desirable not to miss. First of all, failure at anything is always bad. If you only play at battle-

dore and shuttlecock, the thing is to win. And if you miss a stag you have some very bad moments. The sense of failure presents itself remorselessly. All your climbing and wriggling and waiting have gone for nothing. There are few things in sport more mortifying than to gaze on the deer galloping away, with an empty rifle in your hand. No excuses are really of any avail, because no one should ever fire unless there is at least a reasonable chance of hitting. The best thing to do, if you miss, is to say nothing at all. Any self-defence that you may concoct will be seen through by the stalker quickly enough. Others have tried it on him before you. He will, or maybe will not, try to help you out. But he knows, and you know, that your own skill has been wanting. Of course, everyone misses, probably more often than they admit. If every shot were fatal, the hazardous charm of sport would be gone. The next thing to do is to seek out your host directly you get home and make a candid confession, before he hears any other version of the tale. Do not attempt to put any gloss on your performance, because the naked truth will come to light sooner or later when your host gets the report from the stalker.

But if you have killed a good beast, everything is all right. The whole establishment, from the head forester down to the junior housemaid, is delighted. They are British, just as you are. And all good British people love field sports, even if they have never been to the field. They are innately sensitive to the thrill of the chase. It is in their blood.

*The Passing Years.* LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

### A COUNCIL OF PERFECTION

When stalking deer, or watching the approach of a driven herd, try to form a mental picture of the different stags worth shooting. Commit to memory the number of stags in the herd,

the shape of each one's horns, number of points, colour, or other distinguishing particulars. You will thus avoid the risk of emptying your rifle at smaller beasts, when the large stags are still to come into range—a common accident with inexperienced men, who are naturally flurried at the great moment, and blaze at everything with horns.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### THE MINISTERING ANGEL

The entrance into the dining-room of a stalking house, late for dinner, is a critical moment in the day's sport. As the stalker of the day walks into the dining-room, all eyes are turned on him, and he is saluted with a general query from all: "Well—what have you done?" But the question need not be asked; you can generally tell by the way he comes into the room what has taken place on the hill. If he has blood, triumph is in his eye, his gait is brisk and joyous, and he is full of chaff; while if he has failed, he has not a word to say for himself. In the one case he eats like a famished wolf, and finds it difficult to quench his thirst; whereas the poor creature who has missed, or otherwise misbehaved on the hill, has neither heart nor appetite, though he may drink deep to drown the care gnawing at his bosom.

The bachelor seems to me to have much the best time of it when he misses; for he has not to undergo a curtain-lecture, and chaff besides, from the wife of his heart, and beyond his own mortification there is nothing to follow. But the poor married man has, I suspect, a rough time of it in a stalking house when he has misconducted himself or been unsuccessful on the hill; for I notice the wife is as jealous of her husband's reputation and as keen for blood as her lord. How often has one watched the lady's manner on entering the drawing-room!

If her husband has missed, she comes in very quietly and is civil to everyone; but if he has killed a good stag, she enters the room with her nose *en l'air*, and an expression on her face of "Thank God I am not as other women are—my man don't miss".

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### "I SEE HIM!"

I think it was B. who suddenly and laconically remarked, "I see him". The natural question is, "Where?" And then follows one of those maddeningly involved descriptions of locality which baffle every attempt to identify: "In the deep scars right away to the left" (there are hundreds of deep scars); "Below three black rocks underneath the green patch" (there are dozens of such green patches); "Do you see the burn with the white stones? Well, carry your eye down to the foot of it and you will see a beast feeding there". You try to follow all these directions, and carry your eye and your glass up and down, round and round all the scars, the black rocks, burns with the white stones, and yet are no nearer the object of your search. It may happen even that the finder of the beast, in trying to describe his whereabouts, suddenly loses his own bearings, and searches wildly about to find what he was anathematising you a moment ago for being so idiotic as not to see. These are the little humiliating incidents which occasionally give the inexperienced such as I a chance to smile inwardly at the more proficient sportsman who is perhaps found wanting at a crucial moment.

*The High Tops of Black Mount.* THE MARCHIONESS OF BREADALBANE

### "BLOODING"

The modern stalker's toast, "More blood, sir", as he looks towards the sportsman when the stag has been duly galloched,

sounds red, yet there is none less bloodthirsty than the hunters of deer. The little ceremony of "bleeding", of making the sportsman free of the forest, is not in the least revolting; no lady on grassing her first stag was ever known to seek to evade it. It is one of the oldest institutions in the world, a survival of the times when men first hunted for food and the youth first took his place among his elders.

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHIE

### WEIGHING A STAG

*À propos* of weighing a stag, I will here offer a few remarks on this vexed question. There are two ways to weigh a stag—one is "clean weight", the other "foul weight". Clean weight means that before being put on the scale everything is removed from the inside of the stag except his kidneys; in fact, he should be in the same state as a sheep in a butcher's shop. Foul weight means when the heart and liver are weighed in the stag; some people even go to the length of weighing all that is eatable, viz., the stomach-bag, tallow, etc.; but no honest sportsman, or one who knew anything of his business, would permit this sort of thing, and if done, it is done secretly, and not admitted.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### NERVES

I believe there are men whose nervousness nothing can overcome. The worst case I can recollect was that of a dignitary of the Church of England. He had got a day's hind-shooting, and I was appointed to accompany him. A lot of about two hundred deer lay in the bottom of a corrie. They had been driven there by the roughness of the preceding night, but as the day was particularly fine, I expected them to move

back to the tops. I therefore pushed on as fast as possible to get in line of their retreat. Just as I got near the route I expected them to take, the first hind appeared. There was an accumulation of high, broken peat-banks at the place. Behind one of these we lay, while about a hundred yards in front the deer appeared from behind another bank, and disappeared behind a third. The gap between these last two was quite fifty yards away, and as they were all that distance in full view, and moving at a walking pace in single file, our chance was a good one.

I pointed out a hind; my companion raised his rifle, and I watched the beast till she disappeared. A second and a third time the same thing occurred. Now I consider a miss quite excusable, as on such occasions the sportsman has merely done his best and failed, but to abstain from shooting when a good chance offers was about the greatest irritation I had to endure stalking. Picking out another hind, I told him in a rather peremptory manner not to let her pass. At this he wailed out, "Oh dear! What shall I do? What shall I do?" "What the d—— would you do but shoot?" I replied, my patience thoroughly exhausted. He did so, but might just as well have not.

*Days on the Hill. "AN OLD STALKER"*

### AMONG THE THICK O' THEM

Only once can I recall good results of indiscriminate shooting into a herd. Two farmers had been granted a day's hind-shooting by the laird, who also owned a forest. Getting up into a large herd, they began by shooting at individual hinds, but got nothing. At last one remarked to the other, "We're to get naething this way, Jock; let's try a shot among the thick o' them." They did so and dropped a hind each. And not only so, but I doubt if the whole herd could have supplied two better animals.

*Days on the Hill. "AN OLD STALKER"*

*AN IDEAL PLACE*

It was blowing strongly from the south-west (the best wind for our ground) as I started out with the stalker to look for deer along the precipices.

We met nobody but a solitary shepherd returning from the sheep market.

"Weel, Sandy, and how goes it in the town the day?" asks the stalker; but the shepherd has evidently sold his sheep badly, for he answers:

"Bard, very bard; nothing in the town but famine and English—famine and English!"

Along the top of the precipices we proceeded until we reached the southern slopes, which were not quite so steep, and had a covering of bright green grass growing right up the sides. I asked the stalker if this was a noted place for deer, but I got nothing but the reply, "It often used always to be pretty generally good once", and then he sat down to spy.

*Wild Sport in the Outer Hebrides.* C. V. A. PEEL

*EXTRACT FROM JOURNAL OF A HUNTING  
PARTY FROM AUCHRY TO REENACULA*

A Company as you shall hear,  
Of Sportsmen good, late in the year  
Resolv'd to march, be't fair or foul, a'  
From Buchan unto Reenacula—  
The first was Troup, who led the way,  
With Doctor Cumine from Auchry,  
And Master Dockar he was got,  
Three better marksmen never shot;  
With Mr. Smith to bear some toil,  
To cook and keep Troup in his style,



Who always is most kind and fervent,  
To master and to fellow servant;  
And Joseph Fraser with the faggage  
Went on before with cart and baggage,  
James Christie too who had the vagues  
For managing half broken dogs,  
Was press'd by Troup from that report  
That they might have the better sport.  
Upon September second day  
'Twas Munday we march'd from Auchry;  
The reason was thus long to wait,  
The breeding season was too late;  
Those sooner in the highlands shot  
Half of their game but cheepers got.  
We meant our lodging at Freefield,  
But did not find so good a bield:  
The day was rough, and deep the trudging,  
So at Pitmachie we took lodging:  
We were disgusted at the place,  
With dub and dirt 'twas a disgrace.  
The landlord came with heartsome glee  
And gae's a glass quite fair and free,  
He wore a long crape in his hat,  
Was't for his sins, his frien's or what?  
Be't for his wife or nearest frien's  
'Twas sure more needed for his sins:  
His converse was of lewdest whoring,  
And nail'd each tale with oaths and swearing,  
Some thought the conversation guid,  
And swallow'd it like cream and bread,  
Some thought it look'd like contradiction,  
Under a mourning crape's affliction.  
Next day we mov'd our camp by five,  
Swift to the fowling on to drive.

At length we reached Watson's Inn,  
Both tir'd and drabbled to the skin;  
This quarters pleas'd our honour'd gentry,  
The folks were kind, and good things plenty,  
That lovely maid the landlord's sister,  
To civil guests gives no disaster,  
She met's with biscuit and free drams,  
As soon's we enter'd in the rooms,  
Her graceful air and lovely mein,  
Might well become her tho' a queen;  
Its nae for fondness of her gift,  
I praise her thus, that's nae my drift—  
Beauty and worth command attention,  
And I take pleasure them to mention,  
To shew her praise I have not leisure,  
Who gains her hand obtains a treasure.  
Our Sportsmen were well entertain'd,  
All things were suited to their mind;  
They treated us with auld-men's milk,  
And slept on down as soft as silk.  
From Watson's Inn we next did budge,  
Five pleasant miles up to Marr Lodge,  
Near by did run the river Dee,  
Dashing her streams from tree to tree,  
Our Sportsmen bounded o'er a hill,  
Had the good luck a deer to kill.  
For instantly mark what cam' jumping,  
A herd of Deer skipp'd o'er the mountain,  
Dockar ran off, to spy their marking,  
For he was dexterous at stalking,  
Ere he was one hour o'er the hill,  
Dockar's servant roar'd like hell,  
Swinging his bonnet round his head,  
With signs to come to him with speed,

Troup heard and guest the true effect,  
But I thought Dockar'd broke his neck;  
Troup said he'd wager ony gear,  
That Dockar baul' had kill'd a Deer,  
We both did run blasting like bellows,  
To know the cause of such great hallows  
Thro' a long glen of hardened snaw,  
And in our haste got many fa',  
Good news at last rung in our ear',  
'Twas Dockar, he had kill'd twa Deer,  
We hastened till we saw the harts,  
Far bigger than twa-year-auld stirks,  
He took a knife and cut their throats,  
And after that took out their guts.  
Then Troup advis'd us to sit down,  
Gentle, simple, lad and loon,  
And tak' a biscuit and a gill,  
To keep the cauld from doing's ill.  
This information I'll not grudge,  
Wrights sent game-boxes from Marr Lodge,  
Held quarters of the venison;  
And small boxes for other game,  
Each night were pack'd and sent abroad,  
Near Castletown part of the road;  
My memorandum I forgot,  
To mark ilk day what each man shot,  
But I can mind the total number,  
Twenty one braces, and two hunder  
Of grouse besides nine 'tarmigan,  
Thirteen score fowls they sure brought in,  
Besides six deer were kill'd anon,  
Some weighed twelve, some fifteen stone,  
Who could have thought to kill so many,  
All in six days part of them rainy;

Besides a deer, and a wood cock,  
On our way home, James Smith had shot,  
From going away till my return,  
My feet were seldom dry or warm,  
Each day we were wet to the skin,  
But got a dram fan we came in.

*Instructions for Hunting.* JAMES CHRISTIE, GAMEKEEPER (1817)

### THE BIG FALLOW BUCK

Dicky sat down and lit a cigarette. He felt he needed one. He had come out to slaughter a poor little fallow buck of not more than twelve stone; he had felt a certain compunction about it—his rifle was so accurate, and his eye so trained that it had seemed—well, anyhow—the whole thing was great fun for somebody, and it rather looked as though the buck was enjoying it. Hanlan voiced his thoughts for him.

“Happen he didn’t watch out here. Ah’m thinkin’ he ca’ed in those does for that he could sleep here a spell. Ah’m thinkin’ he just said, ‘Tha look out west and tha look out east’; when tha sees two bloody fules come out o’ t’ woods tha mun call me, wimmin—an’ if tha sleeps on it ah’ll butt thee silly——”

Dicky grunted. “And that’s a fact,” he said.

He got up, hitched his rifle under his arm, and led uphill again into the warm woods. The chase settled down once more.

Half an hour later they paused, looking at the ground. The buck had stood here and waited before moving on faster. It was evidently the preliminary move before a turn. Dicky raised a wet finger and thought for a moment, then pointed and led the way sharp to the left and downhill. The buck could turn back either way, but with a slightly quartering wind the odds were on the turn left-handed. A hundred yards down

they stopped to listen, and as they stopped everything seemed to happen at once. Hanlan dived straight down on his face and lay crouching—a buck, twice as big as Dicky had expected, and nearly cream-white in colour, came past with a crash and a rush. There were no does with him. There were trees all around, and rough rocks and fallen trunks between. Dicky allowed a fair swing in front, and pulled the trigger evenly and without checking, at a range of barely fifteen yards. The buck leaped high in the air, his spreading antlers silhouetted against a patch of sky, landed beyond a heap of rock, cleared a tree-trunk, and was gone. Hanlan rose cautiously and looked at Dicky, who was examining a fir-tree with close interest. It was an ordinary sort of fir-tree, about twelve inches thick, but was noticeable for the fact that it had been slashed three inches deep along its side as if a six-pounder shell had touched it. A soft-nosed .303 with a high-velocity axite charge makes just that sort of mark. “And that’s that,” said the sailor.

“Aye,”—a pause. “Aye—Gor! What a head on’ m—like a red deer.”

“Yes—*damn*.”

They walked slowly and gloomily along the spoor. The case was obviously pretty hopeless now. Three miles of wood in front, a badly-scared buck, and more woods across the valley with an open moor above them. They might spoor till dark without coming within a mile of him. But follow they did, and the sun dipped and closed the north-western horizon as they followed. The buck had gone right on to the north end of covert, turned up on the moor and—vanished. Rock and thick heather are poor tracking grounds, and neither of the pursuers were Hottentots. As the light was failing they gave up, and cut downhill by way of the gully that led close past Moordyke House. Six hundred yards from home Dicky stopped, and in silence handed the rifle to Hanlan while he felt for pipe and matches. Hanlan took the weapon, looking up

the gully-side to the south as he waited. As the pipe came out he gripped the hand that held it and froze rigid. Dicky's heart gave a leap, and he gently replaced the matches in his coat pocket, staring to the south also. Then he saw, and reached cautiously for the rifle. Sixty yards away, in among scattered fir-trees, the silhouette of antlers showed. The buck was standing looking up to the moor, head up and motionless. A tree hid his shoulder and two more trees his flanks—between the trees a gap of eight inches or so showed, and Dicky went to his knees and drew a long breath for the shot. As his dim foresight came on he hesitated till Hanlan could have sworn aloud. As a matter of fact, if Hanlan had not been there he would not have fired; his victory had come in the chance of a fair shot, and he would have let his adversary go. But with his keen companion to satisfy, *and* the bets—the shot echoed, ripped and crackled away down the Dale, the blink of bright light at the rifle muzzle indicating the half-darkness of the gully. Hanlan gave a leap forward and stopped, his knife showing in his hand. As the rifle bolt clashed out and in again the buck stepped two paces forward, his knees gave a little, straightened, his head went up, and he fell heavily on his side. They walked up and looked at him: shot just in the right place, and the bullet had not come through—a quick death. Hanlan ran his hand down the smooth tines.

"Eleven," he said, "an' no velvet on—eh! Tha wicked owd sinner, ah'm glad to put knife to thy thrapple. . . ."

*Heather Mixture. "KLAXON"*

### MAKE-BELIEVE

He claimed that the stag was badly hit, but of this I had my doubts. That night I was deputed to look for it on the morrow, and given to understand that I was expected to be successful.

I thought there was every probability that I would be. I had no doubt that he intended me to shoot any stag and pass it off as his wounded one. The beast, however, required to be an eight-pointer, and, though plenty of stags were on the ground, I could see no head at all resembling the one we had shot at on the previous day.

I was almost in despair when, just before evening, I noticed one that would do. He was right at the far side of a large herd that were extended almost from the burn at the bottom of a corrie to half-way up the hillside. The ground was very smooth, and the closest approach I could possibly make barely placed me within range of the highest deer. How was I to get the animal I wanted? Night was approaching, something had to be done, and done at once if I was to escape another failure and another reprimand. At last I hit upon a plan that offered some chance of success. It was only a chance, and I doubt if I would have tried it if I had been stalking to a gentleman. Just across the burn from the lower edge of the herd a considerable area was covered with stones. I felt I could not hit the stag at such a distance, but was confident I could place a bullet somewhere among those stones. If I did so I thought a deer would come towards me, more than likely crossing a long ridge that sloped away on my left. If they crossed any part of the ridge I knew I could meet them.

I therefore put my scheme in operation. Calculating the distance as well as I could, I fired. The bullet hit the stones, raised a cloud of dust, and went away humming. This attracted the attention of the deer, and they dashed uphill, some distance on my left. I had just got within comfortable range behind a peat-bank when the leading files appeared. I knew the stag I wanted would be among the last, so I waited for him, watching through my telescope. Finally I distinguished him, and, laying down my glass, took up the rifle. In this short interval a posse of small beasts got between and remained there, completely covering

him. Gradually he was getting farther and farther off. It looked as if I were to lose him after all. Eventually he dropped so far behind that I could see half his body. In a little he would be clear, but more deer were close behind and gaining ground. I could afford to wait no longer, so, taking as good aim as I could, I pulled. The bullet hit, but in the failing light I could not tell where. The shot caused the herd to accelerate their pace, but the wounded stag fell behind, when I was lucky enough to stop him with a shoulder hit. The first bullet had passed in front of the curve of the haunch. A different reception awaited me that night. I was heartily congratulated, and the other gentlemen in the lodge were brought into the larder to see the stag. Addressing them, my employer said, "I knew he was hard hit and could not go far, but I can't understand how I got him quite so far back; elevation all right, too"—and he pointed out the hole my first bullet had made. Surely I was lucky, for only then did it flash on me that the carcass required to show two bullet holes.

*Days on the Hill. "AN OLD STALKER"*

### THE OMEN

We came right down above the deer; the stag was still lying, and we got within some hundred and fifty yards of him, as near as the ground would allow. Someone else in past days had seen deer in the same place, and had made the same stalk, and had chosen the same position as we did for the shot, for on a stone in front of us were lying four weather-worn empty cartridge-cases. Was it a good or evil omen? I wondered if they had done their work. And so I waited on, trying to keep one hand warm by clasping the thick of the thigh, and the other tight in a pocket. After the first hour we were all three pretty cold, and the luxury of stamping or beating oneself,



or indeed moving anything but one's eyes, was out of the question.

At last—one hour and five-and-twenty minutes after we had taken up our places—the enemy played into our hands. The hinds got up, and walked slowly up the hill till they passed well within a hundred yards of us, and then the stag—seemingly reluctant even then—got up and followed them. He was a light-coloured big-bodied stag, with long narrow-set horns, and he stood within seventy yards of us. And—I missed him; it was certainly the nearest and the easiest chance I had that season, and I missed him—first with one barrel, and then with the other. Then a change came over the feelings of the responsible member of that party; the sun, which had been shining in a sickly way before, seemed to die out and leave the world all grey and cold and dim: the thought of the three already slain deer gave him no consolation; he felt—both inside and out—like a refrigerator. When Mr. Briggs missed his royal, Leech has shown us how the forester threw up his arms in despair, and though we are not told what he said, we can guess some of it. I have never had the ill fortune to be out with a man who whispers “Mind you hit him!” when you are just about to fire, or makes disagreeable remarks when you miss. To a young stalker advice of this kind is not only useless but most harmful, as tending to make him nervous—of course he will hit if he can. Macphail is not of that kidney: if he feels vexed at a good chance being lost he never shows it; he takes a miss most philosophically. On this occasion he watched the deer carefully for a long time, and when he had satisfied himself that it was untouched, he shut up his glass, and muttered, half to himself, with a little sigh, “A big brute!”—that was all.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

*HEY! FOR A GROLLOCKING!**(Verses written at Tolly House in Ross-shire)*

Up in the morning! the river runs merrily,  
Clouds are above and the breezes blow cool,  
Tie the choice fly now, and casting it warily,  
Fish the dark ripple that curls o'er the pool;  
Steadily play with him,  
On through the spray with him,  
Gaff, and away with him  
On to the shore!  
Pastime at Tolly now,  
Oh! it is jolly now,  
Sad melancholy now  
Haunts us no more!

Up in the morning! young birds in full feather now,  
Brood above brood on the mountain-side lie;  
Setters well broken are ranging the heather now,  
Bird after bird taking wing but to die!  
Home then to number  
The grouse that encumber  
Our gillies, where slumber  
To toil gives relief.  
Pastime at Tolly now,  
Oh! it is jolly now,  
No melancholy now,  
Sorrow, or grief.

Up! up! at peep-o'-day, clad for a tussle now!—  
Keen eyes have mark'd the wild hart on the hill;  
Toil for the stalker!—wind, sinew and muscle, now  
All will be needed, ere testing his skill!

Gillies now frolicking,  
Roaring and rollicking,  
(Hey! for a grollocking!)

Rip up the deer,  
Pastime at Tolly now,  
Oh! it is jolly now,  
No melancholy now  
Haunteth us here.

*Hunting Songs.* EGERTON WARBURTON

### SIX SHOTS, SIX STAGS—THE PRELUDE

It was on September 30, 1897, that M'Innes and I made for the top of Aonachmore. We were to make for a certain cairn of stones, and the men were to pass round one of the corries on the way and push up any deer that might be feeding up-wind. We reached the trysted spot and had a good spy into Coiriche Bà and all the adjacent ground, which we found dotted here and there with deer. We hoped perhaps the men might get round a few and send them our way. The air was bitterly cold in these high altitudes, and to sit about long meant to lose all feeling in the feet and most of it in the hands. I soon began to wish to be on the move again. Suddenly we heard a shot away on one of the Black Mount beats: it echoed and reverberated along the rocky face of the corries till it floated away above our heads. Another shot, and yet another. By this time the hills seemed full of sound: we saw the straggling stags on the face of Coiriche Bà lift their heads uneasily and begin to get on the move. The shots had disturbed all the deer as far as eye could reach, and they were moving on. The men who had been sent round would soon be behind them: already we could see the "stops" on one or two distant passes in their places.

It would be impossible to describe the tension of nervous expectancy which assailed me. Whichever way we looked, the deer came slowly on, quietly feeding, walking and lifting heads to sniff the air with quick sense for danger ahead.

Still unconscious of much danger, the deer come on. The wind blows from the balloch below us fair to them, while from the balloch upwards it blows past us, and who cares where? Between now and the time the deer reach us anything may happen. They may turn down the bottom of the corrie or up among the rocks, straight past the stops, back to their safe quarters in the sanctuary. They may get a puff of that fickle wind and dash back in the face of the men behind them. All these things and many more may happen before they are anywhere near within shot of me. Still we wait on; more deer and more gather in numbers as they wend their slow course up the corrie. What began by twos and threes has grown to dozens, dozens to scores, scores to hundreds. We tie the dogs, load the rifle, put a few loose cartridges in our pockets, and become very silent.

M'Innes—at all times a man of few words—says nothing, but watches the scene silently and tensely. I remember even now the thoughts that passed through my mind as to what the meaning of all this might really be. Could it be possible that all these deer would pass by me, and, if so, what should I do? Would they come to the left or the right, singly or in bunches? Should I go on shaking as I was doing now, feeling cold and petrified, partly with the glacial air and partly with excitement?

At a certain point below us the corrie takes a turn which for a long period keeps the deer entirely out of sight. This is the most strenuous moment of all, for as they disappear under the ridge one knows that suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, they may reappear on any or every side in full view for better or worse.

A cold clinging mist has begun to creep over the Tops and

swirl down from time to time dangerously near our hiding-place among the stones. Is there anything so relentless, so enveloping, so completely overpowering, as these diaphanous mists on the High Tops? They seem to come from fairyland; but their cold embrace belies the softness of their fantastic form.

I whisper to M'Innes the dread that in the end the mist will do for us. He shakes his head, and, with me, devoutly hopes the elements will not play us such a cruel trick.

Suddenly the dogs appear alert and watchful, and sniff the air with apparent sense of something interesting. I lift the rifle to my knees and try to forget the almost agonising stiffness of my position. A gentle touch from M'Innes on the arm, and just below—the sensitive ears of a hind! The moment has come.

*The High Tops of Black Mount.* THE MARCHIONESS OF BREADALBANE

### HABET!

Far below us stretched the dull yellowish flat, through which a river, so sluggish in places as almost to turn on itself, wound and twisted to the big lake. Loch Monar and the long chain of the Gedd lochs in Pait wore a sullen, lead-coloured appearance; and around us for very many miles, as far as the eye could see in every direction, stood up the great brown solemn hills. Angy did his work properly; and at last the deer arrived—a string of hinds and calves first, trotting along with the delicate high action which makes one think of King Agag. The oldest and most experienced hind led the company; her long ears were well pointed forward; she moved as if she was stepping on eggs. The wind, which blew fair on her tail, told her of danger behind; she peered eagerly in front, but did not pay much attention to what was above, and never noticed the two grey-clad figures sitting so motionless among the old grey stones. Then passed out more hinds, and after them the stag;

he ambled leisurely along, looking rather bored at having to leave the comfortable shelter. Yet other hinds appeared, quite close, and they saw us, and, after one frightened look to make sure, bolted. The stag, who was a good way farther down the hill, saw them galloping, and instead of making off too—as a wise beast would have done—stopped for a moment, looking up towards us. And then—without any suffering accompanying the act—he died: one tremendous shock, and his troubles, if he had any, and his life, came to an end.

There is—if the doer of the deed be a novice—something a little solemn in going up to a great animal which he has killed. A few moments earlier and the stag, if it had been unable to get from you—if it had been cornered in any way—would almost have died with fear at your approach. Now you can put your hand on his shaggy sides, and touch his horns, and pull straight his long cold grey-brown legs.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### A WOUNDED STAG

The pass led round the side of a very steep burn running between two hills, with cliff-like sides, rocky projections, tussocks of grass, bracken, and rank-growing heathery tufts—in fact, one of those places where, if you do make a slip, it means being dashed to pieces. Following John up the pass, we got near him as he was taking aim at the wounded animal high above him. There were his head and antlers standing out against the dark sky-line as he struggled to clear some rocks. When the bullet struck him his head sank down, and a moment later he was rolling down the declivity. Rolling from one rocky projection to another, he gained an impetus: each time the circle seemed to become greater, and the pace increased till from rock to rock it became really terrible. Finally he struck

a projection, and from it ricocheted into space 300 feet of sheer descent. I fancy I can see him now, legs, body, and head against the sky of that dark rainy evening, hurtling through the air, to strike the precipices on the other side of the gorge a long way below us, and from there bumping again into the rocky burn still farther below, whilst we involuntarily listened for the horrible *thud* we knew must come, to be followed by its echo up the steep gully. It was a curious sight, and I don't think I wish to see it again. I certainly never wish to hear the thud; but it was comforting to know that the sufferings of the poor brute were past. We found him lying in the burn in a shallow pool, just above a small waterfall, reminding one of some Landseer picture.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### THE DEATH OF THE RED STAG

Red Stag of the forest, I saw thee at dawn  
Stalk out from thy couch in the mist-curtained glen,  
When touched the red heath like a glory the morn,  
And warmed to a blush the rough face of the Ben.  
Oh say! did the keen autumn air whisper warning,  
Thou wast treading thy last the cool dew of the morning?

Gaze long on the mountain and heather, and dream  
O'er the tender green leaves, that have fed thee before,  
Hasten not o'er the stones of the clear running stream,  
Deep, deep be thy draught, thou shalt drink nevermore.  
There's an eye that has marked, and a form that has crept,  
With death in its hand, whilst the Red Monarch slept.

Dreams on the still morning, the long hours drowse,  
And the silence that lays on the mountain's steep sides

Softly calleth the sleepy Red King from his browse,  
To his rest on the heather, alone with his brides.  
Sadly gaze, ye soft eyes, on his antlers so broad,  
Too soon ye will rush from the death of your lord.

There's a movement above, like the march of a snake  
Through the slow-parting heather; and evermore near  
Crawls on the keen sportsman. Now, Monarch, awake!  
But he slumbers on, dreamily twitching his ear.  
Heaven send that no loud-calling grouse break the charm,  
Ringing down through the silence shrill notes of alarm.

All is still as the grave, save the beat of a heart,  
And the tremble of muscles of iron. 'Tis strange  
How the sights which have levelled as straight as a dart,  
Will jump as they peep at a hart within range.  
Ha! steady at last—a long pressure and slow,  
A crack that far echoes—the Monarch lies low!

“ 'Twas a gran' shot whatever!” “And sport meet for kings,  
Is the stalk to a king in the land of his rule;  
And deep is the craft that successfully brings,  
Twenty stone within range of this trusty old tool!”  
And the sportsman delighted, looks lovingly down  
On the steely-blue barrels in wood of nut-brown.

COLONEL M. H. GRANT

### *MAC SHERLOCK*

The old stalker kindly began to make excuses for me.  
“No, no,” I replied, “I missed the stag because I could not shoot straight; it is a bad business; anyhow, it is better than having wounded him badly and then lost him; now we have



got to get back as fast as we can." And then in the gloom and mist, running and walking and tumbling, away we went. The last mile was down a hill path filled with loose stones. At last we reached the end of the road, and saw the car coming up from a point about a mile lower down the road where Stuart had arranged to meet us. "Well," I said, "I hope at any rate that Mr. Stuart has got a stag, if not two." The stalker had been looking carefully at the road. "No," he said, "Mr. Stuart has no stag the day." I said, "How do you know that?" "Oh," he said, pointing to the marks on the road, "his ponies have gone home trotting—look at the marks of their hoofs—and if Mr. Stuart had got a stag the ponies would be walking."

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

### THE DEOCH FALA<sup>1</sup>

So sit we where the amber rill  
Soaks on through greenest green,  
For every pace from crawl to race  
Has tried our limbs I ween.  
The stalk was long, the wind was coy:  
We've won the death-drink here—  
Once more the hunter's homespun joy,  
The hard hill forest cheer,  
The rest beside the brindled rock,  
The broad view far and near,  
The wandering, pondering dream of dreams—  
The dream beside the deer.

Red hide, long antler, restless eye,  
Fleet hoof of fire and air,

<sup>1</sup> The Death-Drink.

The grouse may crow, the plover cry,  
The loveliest hind may pass him by  
And he'll take little care;  
Yet short the pang, and kind the ball  
That smote his shoulder through;  
And if our end be quick as his  
Not I to heed, nor you.

GEORGE LAWRENCE

### THE ROYAL'S REVENGE

And that's another thing about trophies, especially the best and most justifiable of them—stags' antlers to wit, they, I say, do so tend to make you old before your time. I mean the bonny head, that once you so proudly saw hoist upon the deer saddle, may, perhaps, one evening. . . .

The white frontal bone bears, in faded ink, the following superscription:

Beinmacspindie, 10th Sept., 1886

and, "Did you shoot that topping royal, Uncle George?" enquires your youthful nephew.

"Yes, my lad, you don't suppose I *bought* it, do you?"

"By Jove"—and Master Tom will get up, and, port glass in hand, pay it and you the compliment of a closer inspection. You will watch him read that writing on the wall, you will suddenly suspect him of mental arithmetic, and you will realise, perhaps for the first time, that you are about due to be stuffed yourself.

And in some peaceful corrie of the moon a great hart will, for a moment, lift his shadowy coronal—brow, bay and tray—and then drop his broad muzzle again and resume his quiet grazing with a ghostly and sardonic sniff.

*At the Sign of the Dog and Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS



# THE FOREST

## IV. SOME OF ITS MAXIMS AND VALUABLE THOUGHTS

*And the words of his mouth were as slaves spreading carpets of glory  
Embroidered with names of the Djinn.*

RUDYARD KIPLING



# THE FOREST

## IV. SOME OF ITS MAXIMS AND VALUABLE THOUGHTS

### TREES

“TREES? Wha ever heard tell o’ trees in a forest?”

TRADITIONAL

### THE TWO THINGS NEEDFUL

Of this the sportsman may be certain, that he will never make a good stalker if he is lazy, or a successful one unless he takes the trouble to learn why he fails.

*Badminton Library.* LORD LOVAT

### WHAT YOU CANNOT AFFORD

You can never afford to lose your head or your temper stalking; if you do you are sure to pay for it. If you ever lose your patience and are tempted to scamp something which you ought not to have scamped, and to make a straight dash at that which you ought to have circumvented, you will to a certainty fail.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

## 150 YARDS

However well men may shoot at a small mark on a target at a long distance, I venture to implore them to think of the misery and pain they may cause to poor deer for years by reckless shooting; and I beseech them to keep in mind, when getting near the end of their stalk, the words—one hundred and fifty yards.

Horatio Ross's Introduction to  
*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

## A THING TO REMEMBER

It is a great mistake to begin to make excuses for missing, as, however justifiable they may be, nobody believes them.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

## STAG FEVER

We will take it for granted that the shooter has had "stag fever", and is well over it, or perhaps nature has made him altogether superior to such a malady. But if he has not escaped it—and if there are two novices together it is as catching as measles—the disease must run its course; advice will not cure, *neither will whisky*; but after a course of downright bad misses the foresight of your rifle will by degrees cease to wobble round and round.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

## PEEPING TOM

It is always most amusing to watch through the glass the stalking of another party—their creeping and crawling appears

so comical, and they are so perfectly unconscious of being watched.

N.B.—Engaged couples and honeymooners will do well to bear this in mind if they are wandering in the vicinity of deer forests!

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### THE TROPHY

When cutting off the head of a stag that is considered worth setting up, insert the knife almost as low down as the join of the neck and the body; pass it round the skin, and then turn it back and sever the neck bone higher up. By doing this, the "Snowie" you may select to send it to for preservation will have an opportunity of setting up the head with a curve to the neck, which shows it off to much greater advantage. If you should happen to have a couple of niches, one on each side of a fire-place or side-board, this method of setting up is very desirable, as one head can be turned to the right, and the other to the left, so that the two are looking towards each other, and thus they are far more ornamental to a room; but wherever the head be sent to for preservation, do not forget to state which way the head is to look.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### GILDING THE LILY

It is perfectly fair and legitimate to give the extreme points of the horns a slight scrape so as to render the tips white; a piece of glass is the best thing to use. This being done the horns look much better, and make a greater show when mounted on wooden shields and hung round the walls of a room. It is also absolutely true to nature, as anyone can see for himself, if he



will observe red deer after the stalking season is over, and in December and later, all the stags with good heads have the tips of their horns quite white and burnished—indeed, most October deer have this, but those killed early in September, especially in a late season, have not put on the finishing touches, which they accomplish by incessant and violent rubbing against the bunches of long rushes that grow so luxuriantly on the hills. The horns of the deer killed with the velvet partly on may be made a good colour by rubbing them with a handful of wet peat or by staining them with "Stevens' Oak Stain". A fine-pointed pen should be used for writing the dates, etc., on the skull; a broad-pointed one will cause the ink to run.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### A VALUABLE THOUGHT

Many deer are doubtless missed upon the hillside, but few indeed in the smoking-room.

*Autumns in Argyleshire.* A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY

### THE FENCED FOREST

In a fenced forest the unnatural conditions under which sport exists in an inhabited country are emphasised to an extent which detracts enormously from its enjoyment. There always remains the unpleasant feeling at the back of one's mind that the animal which is being stalked cannot escape.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### ON ROUGH GROUND

If, on rough ground, you trip up, or slip, *drop at once*; don't attempt to recover yourself. A good hill-man slips, drops on

one knee or altogether, and picks himself up again, scarcely losing his stride; a bad one stumbles on in vain hope of saving himself, and falls heavily into a bog or on to a rock. There is as much art in falling on the hill as in the hunting-field.

*Badminton Library.* LORD LOVAT

### THE AGRICULTURISTS

Be suspicious of too long a "spy" for deer; it may only be a lazy way of passing the time. Once I caught two stalkers (who did not think I understood any Gaelic), "spying" the oats in each other's crofts, and comparing their ripeness, when they were supposed to be spying for deer.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

A good forester generally becomes very nervous in the long run, from the bungling of some gentlemen and the ill-temper of others, together with his constant anxiety to procure them fair chances.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### JOY "AT THE HORSEMAN'S BACK"

I think it will be admitted by those who love both stalking and fox-hunting that a ride home in the dark on a Highland pony after the killing of a fine stag is accompanied with pleasanter feelings and less sense of discomfort than the return on a tired hunter after the best run of the season.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### “DOON WI’ YE!”

This writer has been guilty of many faults when stalking: he has often missed a stag when he ought to have killed it, and may now and then—though this not very often—have lost a chance through some clumsy movement, or by dislodging a stone, but never by any fear of wetting any part of him on the very wettest hill. Often when crawling in full sight of deer, when some movement among them has made the stalker uneasy, I have seen his grave anxious face turned slowly round to see if the middle man was doing his duty, and I am thankful to think that in this respect at least I have never been found wanting. Some shirk this wet abominably: you will see a great long-legged man crawling along with his head nearly on the ground, and his legs on the ground, and his great body all humped up three feet in the air—a sight disgusting to the deer and to all beholders.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### “DOON WI’ YE” AGAIN

Keep close to the stalker, and be *sure* and keep *as low as he does*. One who understands his work will often be only an inch or two out of sight of his quarry, and it is unfair, and enough to make him think unutterable things, if, keeping a few inches higher than he is, you let the deer into the secret just at the end of the stalk. Few things can be more disheartening or trying to his temper than for him to find all the trouble he has taken to get his gentleman a shot has been wasted through carelessness. I remember hearing of the quiet sarcasm of a stalker, who, just at the end of a very long creep, had seen the deer put away by his gentleman.

“Why, what on earth could have put them away?” ex-

claimed the disappointed sportsman. Gravely to him replied the stalker, who had been advancing *flat on his stomach*, while the gentleman had been crawling on his *hands and knees*, "Why, you was waalking when I was craaling."

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

## HOW TO CRAWL

You will take care, when in view of deer on bare ground, and endeavouring to approach them, that your motions be slow like those of a snail, especially when in close quarters. You must not move either hand or foot too suddenly. Your head should be foremost when going uphill, your feet when going down, and you should creep on your belly or hands and knees when on level ground. Some people have a bad practice of lifting their feet when on their belly in the struggle for getting on.

*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

## THE LAST FEW YARDS

There is no objection to anyone doing for himself the last few yards of the stalk. *If he can be trusted*, it is far better and safer that he should do so.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

## DON'T

If you are successful, and come home having left a couple of good stags on the hill, do not talk about "two fat deer sixteen stone each" unless you are *certain*, for you will look rather small next day if, when they are put into the larder, the weighing machine says they are barely fourteen stone each; also, if

you "fancy" yourself at walking, it will be wiser not to state at the dinner-table that you never yet met the man who could walk you down, for you will be very apt to meet one the next day who will at any rate have a try, even if he does not succeed. The butler and the footman are usually good friends with the stalker and next day you will find yourself in for a tramp which will considerably astonish you, for these sort of remarks are apt to be taken literally, and the first chance will be seized of having a "feel" at you, just to see what you are made of; there will likely enough be more walking than stalking that day.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### HINTS TO YOUNG STALKERS

These hints, given by request of several stalkers in the budding and gillies waiting for promotion, have passed three censors, and so have a certain value. It is taken for granted that the gillie is not altogether ignorant of the duties of a stalker.

Before starting for the hill it is the stalker's duty to see to the rifle, whether belonging to the host or the guest, also to the proper cartridges and the rifle-cover. He should also ascertain that he has the luncheon-bag intended for his party, and arrange for the necessary gillies and ponies with deer and riding-saddles, etc. It is not desirable to let a sportsman to the hill with the idea that he can bombard the forest. It is of course always advisable for the stalker to have a couple of cartridges in reserve, unknown to the gentleman, in case of emergency. If the gentleman is an old friend of the house he will probably know the stalker; if unknown, then the stalker may introduce himself thus, as he raises his cap: "I am stalking for you to-day, sir".

Presuming that the gentleman is a stranger and has not a rifle of his own, he is shown the rifle and told all about it. It is

essential that the gentleman should test it at the target. The gillie carries the rifle; if there is no gillie that task falls to the stalker.

When walking on the road gentleman and stalker keep alongside each other, gillie and pony-man following. The stalker should point out everything of particular interest in connection with the forest, but should carefully avoid introducing subjects unless certain that the sportsman wants to learn as much as possible. As a rule the sportsman prefers a stalker who has something pertinent to say, but the gushing stalker is a nuisance. While being invariably polite, the stalker must avoid the too frequent use of the word "sir"; let it always be used, however, after "No" and "Yes".

The forest entered, the spying spot will be near; there a halt will of course be made, when all will use their glasses. Now the stalker may explain his plan of campaign, so far as yet determined, and give his reasons, always provided his gentleman is in search of such knowledge—there are always a few sportsmen who care for nothing till the rifle is handed them at the firing-point.

Very likely nothing may be seen; the day is too fine; a stormy day often proves good for stalking; the deer may have taken to the tops; hereafter the gentleman may have to be told to take his place behind his stalker, to stop dead, to gently subside on the ground, carefully following the example of the stalker. The stalker suits his pace to that of his gentleman. The ground has now to be carefully watched and probably glassed. A prolonged spy may be necessary at the second spying spot; the gentleman may take part, and will be instructed, if need be, as to his position and movements. If the gentleman shows any anxiety to pick out what deer may be visible and worth a shot, the stalker will give him the necessary hints as to the use of the telescope, etc.; but he should not be persuaded by the gentleman to do anything which he knows by experi-

ence to be wrong. This may take time, but the time will be well spent; the beasts may be too far off to be sure of their quality, but in a fair-sized herd there is pretty sure to be at least one stag worthy of a bullet.

To get nearer this herd the stalker may have to lead a short retreat and so come up behind it. Now is his critical time; he must have all his wits about him, not allowing his mind to wander for one moment. Heretofore the gentleman has been at full liberty to ask what questions he likes; he may now be warned that complete silence is necessary; too often there is a wretched old hind, all eyes and ears, to be faced; beware! for she may give the stalk away.

The stalker sinks to the ground, the eager sportsman does the same, avoiding, however, all sudden or jerky movements. There are hinds in the way; the party must go back and get past them lower down; fortunately there is a burn between the banks of which an advance may be made. Then a point will be reached where the stags are once more in sight; it may be judicious now to have lunch; too much time should not be taken over it. If the gentleman does not invite the stalker to come alongside, then the stalker takes his seat a few yards off. If the stalker knows of a spring near by, or, better still, a burn which affords shelter as well, that will be the most convenient spot for lunch; the neighbouring ground will be carefully spied. Now is the time to let the gentleman fully understand the why and the wherefore of certain movements.

Nothing apparently bars the way and the stalk is resumed; the party gets within four hundred yards of the deer; a cautious crawl has to be made close together, moving inch by inch, with eyes fixed on any deer with their heads facing them; if feeding, should a beast suddenly raise its head, the party should remain absolutely still until the animal begins to feed again. Another spy reveals several good-looking beasts; the stalker has now to mark his ground well, studying how to get his



“DON’T SHOOT—HE’LL CRASH!”





gentleman within range, between eighty and one hundred and fifty yards. The final advance must be made with deliberation, otherwise the gentleman may be winded. The gillie quite understands the position, and so takes the rifle from the cover; it is then loaded and put on "safe" and returned to the cover, to be now carried by the stalker. The party proceeds, but there is a hollow to negotiate which they have to crawl through, after which a short rest—crawling is hard work, but walking or running in a stooping position is little, if any, better.

Now it is plain sailing for a hundred yards, after which the stalker moves slowly step by step, all the while intently scanning the ground; he raises his hand as a signal to stop; he steps back beside his gentleman. He makes his gentleman "wise", explaining briefly the position as he indicates a point to which they have now to crawl, flat as may be; there the shot is to be taken. The gillie, obedient to signal, remains steady. The beast to be grassed is pointed out, the gentleman being placed in as comfortable a position as circumstances will permit. If the stag is lying down and not worth spending the day over, then put him up by carefully making the knobber, or the old hind on the right, suspicious by the use of a cap or handkerchief. When the knobber or hind gets up, the stag's attention will be arrested, and they will gradually get up one by one until the object of the stalk rises. "Now, sir, he is right; take plenty time, there's no hurry." Unless the gentleman is a poor marksman he now secures his first (?) stag, and the stalker, a gillie yesterday, has proved himself worthy of his promotion.

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHIE

### THE MAN WHO THOUGHT HE KNEW

There was a man who thought he knew everything there was to know about stalking, though in reality he knew very

little. Having killed one stag in the morning with a stalker, he announced his intention of stalking for the rest of the day himself. The stalker was to carry the rifle and answer questions, but was forbidden to volunteer remarks on his own account. The expert found a stag later in the day which he proceeded to stalk, his follower carrying out the directions which he had been given. About three o'clock, to his own delight, the former found himself lying comfortably behind a rock within shot of his quarry, which was lying down. He proceeded to eat his lunch, keeping a wary eye on the beast.

About four-thirty he remarked to the stalker, "This stag's a long time getting up."

Stalker: "Ay! He will be verra long in rising."

5 P.M. Above remarks repeated.

5.30 P.M. Ditto.

6 P.M. Ditto.

Exasperated sportsman: "What the devil do you mean?"

Stalker: "He will be long rising, because he is deid!"

It was the stag he had killed in the morning! *So when alone make certain of the stag you are stalking.*

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### TIPS

The whole system of tipping is, of course, quite wrong, though probably ineradicable. In one large forest tips are forbidden, though the guest is allowed to contribute a certain sum towards a central fund. Everyone who has undergone that dreadful last—apparently aimless—saunter, on the morning of his departure, meeting as though by chance and with an air of pleased surprise, the stalkers, keepers, pony-boys, chauffeur, butler, footman, *et hoc genus omne*, will realise how greatly such an arrangement adds to the pleasure of a visit.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

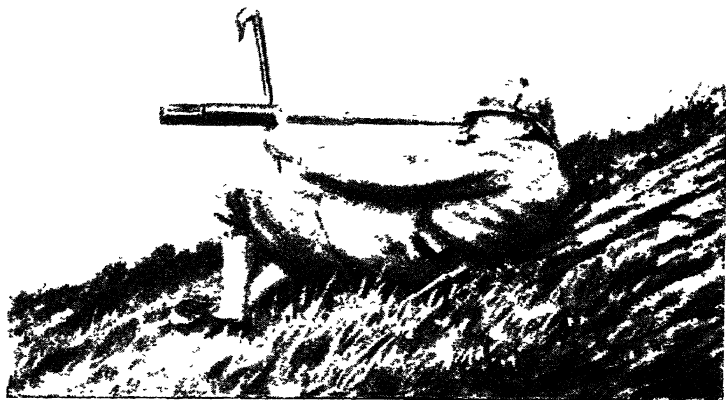
## WHISKY

“There, pass it round with wishes for success, and do not ‘spill the good creature’, for on such a morning as this, believe me, it is most salubrious; manifold indeed are its virtues. What trades does it not quicken? It is a good carpenter, a good mason, a good road-maker, and a most capital deer-driver, provided it be moderately and discreetly dealt with, just as you deal with it, gentlemen.”

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE



# SOME FORESTERS



*He dropped from the mountain's crest,  
He trod the ling like a buck in spring  
And he looked like a lance in rest.*

RUDYARD KIPLING



## SOME FORESTERS

### ESAU

VENISON plays so important a part in the story of the human race, that volumes might be devoted to it. For Esau, having been robbed of his birthright, turned his back upon pastoral pursuits. He became the chief of a race of hunters, and the father of the roving Edomites, with their hand against every man. They multiplied and spread over the wildernesses of Mesopotamia and the sandy wastes of the Arabian deserts. Then what between hunger and greed, when fired by the match of fanaticism, they broke out of their deserts under the prophet of God, and threatened to overrun Europe with their locust-like swarms. So that had Esau come home half an hour sooner with his haunch of venison, the destinies of a great part of the world would have been altered.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### THE LAIRD OF ABBOTSFORD

He was a great, simple, sincere, warm-hearted man. He never turned aside from his fellows in gloomy scorn; his lip never curled with a fine disdain. He liked society, his friends, his dogs, his domestics, his trees, his historical nick-nacks. At Abbotsford, he would write a chapter of a novel before his guests were out of bed, spend the day with them and then, at



dinner, with his store of shrewd Scottish anecdote, brighten the table more than did the champagne. When in Edinburgh, anyone might see him in the streets or in the Parliament House. He was loved by everybody. No one so popular among the souters of Selkirk as the *Shirra*. George IV., on his visit to the northern kingdom, declared that Scott was the man he most wished to see. He was the deepest, simplest man of his time. The mass of his greatness takes away from our sense of its height. He sinks like Ben Cruachan, shoulder after shoulder, slowly, till its base is twenty miles in girth. Scotland is Scotland. He is the light in which it is seen.

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH

### DR. JOHNSON

"Life has little better to offer than this," Dr. Johnson observed on one occasion, when thoroughly enjoying himself in the Highlands, devoted as he was to Fleet Street.

*Mountain Stream and Covert.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### SCROPE

The passion for deer and hills, which had inspired the poetry of the Gael, caught fire afresh from the high tops of Athole, and at the call of Scrope (1838), the chase of the hill stag instantaneously gripped the imagination of the sporting world. It drew, as by an irresistible magnet, the boundless stores of southern wealth and enterprise to the stony heart of our northern desert. It cut roads, threw up bridges, improved harbours, and promoted railways; it rebuilt old homes and created new ones; it replanted forests, as at Ardverikie; and as at Braemore, it made the desert to blossom like the rose. For the Highland crofters who still clung to their native glens, it opened up new

avenues of remunerative employment when the tide of their fortune was at the lowest ebb; and it enlisted their young men in a permanent occupation for which they had inherited aptitude, and which touched their hearts on a peculiarly responsive chord.

Scrope found the stag at the top of his form, and wrote, as he felt, with the enthusiasm which creates an epoch. Hill-stalking as he conceived it—when the man who stalks and the man who shoots are one and the same—is probably the most exhilarating sport known, and it constitutes a test of physical and mental capacity which few other sports afford in a like degree. The keen air, the spacious scale of the surroundings, the weird voices of the wilderness, the immense solitude, seem in themselves to stir the blood and nerve the frame for exceptional achievement. Primitive instincts—a quick eye to find the quarry, feline cunning in approach, a sure hand to kill—play a principal part; but to give them a winning chance the stalker must be sound in wind and limb, a good mover, supple in constrained positions, swift in calculation, capable of sustained effort, and absolutely self-reliant throughout. He roams “an equal amid mightiest energies”, and he can risk as much or as little as he desires. He may hang by the mere grip of his knees and toes on the edge of the precipitous scaur to make sure of his shot; he may tempt, breast-high, the foaming spate in the big burn, or climb a rock-staircase up its roaring torrent to win within shooting distance of his quarry; he may sidle like a crab across a shifting slope of rotten screes to humour the wind, with the off-chance of dropping on nothing if he slips a foot.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

*CHISHOLM*

My worthy friend Chisholm (Lochiel's head forester at Achnacarry) religiously adhered to the golden rule of silence after handing the rifle to his gentleman. He used to say to me, in his solemn way, "that he jist thought, when once a sportsman was in the presence of deer and the rifle in his hand, waiting for the shot, he had quite as much as ever he could manage without his being talked to". It has happened to me once or twice, years ago, when in this position, to seek his opinion; but no, not one word or sign could I get out of him; he would lie just behind me, motionless as a statue, with his dark eyes fixed on the deer, and his face and lips quite white from suppressed excitement. Chisholm was one of the best and keenest stalkers I have known, one of the old school, besides being an agreeable companion on the hill, full of experience, observation, and quaint original ideas and sayings—"Chisholmania", as we used to call them. He was brought up in a famous method by a gentleman who knew the noble art of the stalker thoroughly, Major Inghe, a man well known and loved by all the stalkers and gillies of the West.

Chisholm used to say that every day he went to the "hill" he found he had something new to learn, and laid up a fresh store of experience and observation. One day when discussing the endless variety of stalking, and how the brutes never did the same thing twice alike, he wound up, solemnly shaking his head, with, "Ah yes, Cornel, indeed, I niver goes to the hull but them shtags sinds me to college!"

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

*AN OLD SPORTSMAN*

I dare say he had been a good hill-man in his time, but his day was past. Every night the old man returned to the lodge

hardly able to drag himself along, but he was always ready to start next morning, and as keen as ever.

I remember being out with him and a colonel several years his junior, when the weather changed to mist and rain later in the afternoon. The colonel advocated going home several times, but to this his companion demurred, always exclaiming, "It's going off; it's only a passing shower; it'll soon be fine!" At last the colonel irritably called to him, "Come away home, Charlie; remember you're no longer a young man." "That's why I want to stick to it," Charlie replied, "for I won't have much longer of it now."

*Days on the Hill.* "AN OLD STALKER"

### GORDON AND THE GARTER

Gordon, stalker at Sunart, was a good fellow. He said Davidson of Tulloch felt the cold less than anyone he had known; that he lay for two hours in snow in Cluny's Forest, being prevented by a sheep from getting near a deer; Tulloch quite comfortable, Gordon shivering, both in Highland dress. At last Gordon crawled up to the sheep, caught it napping, tied its legs with his garter, and they got the stag.

*Records of a Quiet Life.* COLONEL C. GREENHILL GARDYNE

### MALCOLM—HIS LETTER TO MESSRS C. V. A. & A. PEEL

To Mr. C. V. and A. Pill, Esquire.  
Oxford,  
England, N.B.

My der gentlemans yours kind and vary welcolm Prasant  
received and the Mrs. vary please with the mac-indoch-water-

pruf and the vary fut. Scuse me for bing so long in answering to you. I was wating for to have some prasant to you. I want out yester morning. I saw a big lot of bangal geses at the llands and away I went on Mr. Pill lug. I got close to them as about seventy yards. I fire at them with the old mouse lodder rufier. Two was killed at the spot. One was wounded badly but he can swum. I rum after but the watter is to dip. I cannot rum fast and the gis got to a dip watter and left Malcolm. But I was glad I hef two for Mr. Pill and away at wance with the post also two pares of stockings to Mr. John Pill as prasant hopping he is well in helith and all the other gentlemans that vided us and not forgitting your Madam Mother. I have vary cold wither since two or three weeks now. Vary heffy snow and frost.

Yrs. truly MALCOLM —

P.S.—How is little Jocke the little wise dog what come to help to shoot Mr. Pill?

*Wild Sport in the Outer Hebrides.* C. V. A. PEEL

### DUNCAN MACINTYRE

Duncan Ban Macintyre, or, as he was commonly called, *Donnacha Ban nan Oran*; i.e. "Fairhaired Duncan of the Songs", was born of poor parents, at Druimliaghart, in Glenorchy, March 1724, where he spent the earlier part of his life, engaged in fowling and fishing, of which he was very fond. He never enjoyed the benefit of attending school, and never learned to read during his lifetime. Although he early displayed a strong love for his native poetry, and exhibited symptoms of having the poetic vein himself, he produced nothing worthy of preservation until his twenty-second year. Having joined the royalists, as a substitute for a Mr. Fletcher of Glenorchy, he was present at the memorable battle of Falkirk, fought on the 17th of January 1746, and served under the command of

Colonel Campbell of Carwhin. On joining the army, Mr. Fletcher had supplied Duncan with his sword, which, unfortunately, he lost—some said he threw it away—in the retreat; and on his return without it, he was refused the sum for which he engaged to jeopardise his life, 300 merks Scots, or £16 : 17 : 6 English money. It was then, and for that reason, that he composed his poem called “The Battle of Falkirk”, in which he gives a minute and lively description of what came under his own observation, and especially of “Claidheamh Ceannard Chloinn-an-Leistear”, *i.e.* the Chief of Clan Fletcher’s sword. He there endeavours to justify himself for his retreat, and more especially for parting with such a useless weapon; and hints that he would have fought with more zeal and heart had it been in the cause of the unfortunate Prince. The poet, however, had ample retaliation on his principal for his meanness in refusing to pay him the amount agreed on; for the poem was soon known and recited throughout the country; and the ridicule thrown so ingeniously on Mr. Fletcher for refusing to pay him the bounty was well known in all directions. And, not satisfied with what he had said of the useless sword, he complained to the Earl of Breadalbane of the injustice done him, who compelled Mr. Fletcher to pay him what he promised. This act of justice by the Earl so exasperated Mr. Fletcher, that he seized the first opportunity he had of meeting the poet, to apply his stick to his back, crying out—“*Bi dol, a bhalaich, agus dean òran air a sin*”, *i.e.* “Go, fellow, and make a song on *that*”. The humble poet was obliged to submit in silence, and, shrugging his shoulders, walked away, little regarding the slight pain inflicted on him; but the wounds of the passionate man inflicted by the cutting satire of genius, were worse to cure; and were only probed anew by the disapprobation and disgust of all who saw or heard of this cowardly action.

Duncan was shortly after this period appointed forester or gamekeeper to the Earl of Breadalbane, in Coire-Cheathaich

and Beinn-dòrain, and afterwards to the Duke of Argyle, in Buachaill-Eite. In these situations, he invoked the Muse with success, and his description of these delightful spots given in his celebrated poems "Beinn-dòrain" and "Coire-Cheathaich" are inimitable, and have secured his name a conspicuous place in the list of our Highland Bards.

In personal appearance, especially during his younger days, he is said to have been remarkably handsome and prepossessing, and throughout his life his manner and disposition were agreeable and easy. He was noted for his convivial and pleasant company; and many anecdotes of his wit and repartee are still on record. Though inoffensive, and seldom known to provoke any person when not attacked himself, his verses told severely on his enemies, or on those who had merited his resentment; and this he could do on the spur of the moment. It is related that when he presented his inimitable panegyric of John Campbell of the Bank, he demanded a bard's fee for the verses. "No," replied that gentleman—"what reward do you deserve for telling the truth? You must confess that you could say no less of me; besides, I doubt if you are the author: so to convince me, let us hear how you can dispraise me, and then I shall know whether you have been able to compose what you have just repeated." Duncan instantly commenced in the same measure, and continued, in ready and flowing numbers, so as to amuse those who were present, that the gentleman was glad to make him stop, by giving him his reward. When our bard was travelling through the Highlands to dispose of his poems in 1790, a forward young man came rudely up to him and asked, "An sibhse rinn Beinn-dòrain?" to which the bard answered, "Ud! ud! a ghaolaich cha mi; 's ann a rinneadh Beinn-dòrain comhladh ris na beanntaichean eile, ciann mu'n d'rugadh tu-féin no mise"; that is, "Was it you that made Beinn-dòrain?" To which the poet answered, "Tut! tut! my good fellow, Beinn-dòrain was made along with the other

mountains, long before either you or I was born; but I made a poem in praise of Beinn-dòrain”.

We have already noticed that our author could not read, and consequently could not write down his poems when composed; but so tenacious was his memory, that he could recite all his own verses, and great part of his native bards. The first edition of his poems, published in 1768, was written by a clergyman from oral recitation.<sup>1</sup>

Introduction to *Songs and Poems*. DUNCAN BAN MACINTYRE

### LORD LASCELLES

On my way up through the forest I had a fine opportunity of spying a stalk by Lord Lascelles just opposite the road. I had in view both the deer and the stalkers. Just as they were getting within shot, I noticed the deer had got their wind and bolted. Up got his lordship, and, standing, killed his stag full gallop, from the shoulder, a very pretty and a long shot!

*Deer-Stalking*. H. H. CREALOCK

### THE BONNY DUKE OF GORDON

The gallant spirit is fled—the benefactor, the father, the beloved of his people, is gathered to the tomb of his fathers. Mournfully has his lament sounded from the dumb heights of Corrie-arich, and been borne over many a mountain, and through many a glen, from the hospitable shores of the Spey to the dark pines of Rothiemurcus.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands*. WILLIAM SCROPE

<sup>1</sup> The minister of Druimliaghart.



*DONALD CAIRD*

Donald Caird can wire a maukin';  
Kens the wiles o' dun deer staukin';  
Listers kippers, makes a shift  
To shoot a moor-fowl in a drift.  
Water-bailiffs, rangers, keepers,  
He can wauk whiles they are sleepers;  
Nor for bountith or reward,  
Dare you mell wi' Donald Caird.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*ROUALEYN*

Roualeyn George Gordon-Cumming was a younger son of Sir William George Gordon-Cumming, of Altyre, in Morayshire, and at the age of twenty-three, in the year 1843, he began his five years' sport and exploration in South Africa.

I have had the satisfaction of seeing and speaking to "Roualeyn", as he was called by everyone in his native district, who, when occasionally in want of powder and shot in the end of the fifties and beginning of the sixties, would find his way to Inverness to replenish his store. At that time the lion-killer was about forty years of age, living mainly on the proceeds from his museum of African trophies, at Fort Augustus on the Caledonian Canal. Tourists and sportsmen then usually travelled to the Highland capital by steamer, which had to pass through a number of locks at Fort Augustus, giving passengers time to pay a visit to the lion-killer's exhibition while waiting for the boat. Roualeyn lived at Fort Augustus, and roamed the whole country round fishing and shooting where he chose, almost as freely as if in the African wilds. On some shootings he had permission to do as he liked, and on others he assumed such privileges as he enjoyed. Keeping at that time was not

very strict, and the remains of the old custom of permitting those who chose to shoot and fish where they liked had not quite disappeared.

It has been stated that the Highlanders believed that he had the gift of second sight. That I never heard said of Roualeyn, though there was undoubtedly a feeling with some of the more credulous that there was something "uncanny" about him. This can be easily understood by those who ever saw Roualeyn roaming over the hills in the kilt which he constantly wore, a magnificent figure of a man, with long hair and long beard which he must have accustomed himself to in the elephant country, and never discarded. Only forty-six he was when he bade adieu to sport, which was all that this life contained for him, and of which he had had a much larger portion than had fallen to any other man of his years and opportunities. To the last he looked every inch the Highland chieftain, whose eagle eye, whatever might happen, could quail before no earthly power. His headlong courage had carried him through dangers that would have overwhelmed other men; and that courage was evident in his bearing even on the last occasion I saw him, a few months before his death.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE

### LORD POWERSCOURT ON "ROUALEYN"

He was very poor, and used to support himself by an exhibition of his sporting trophies, where he used to attend in his Highland dress, and relate his adventures and explain his collections at a charge of one or two shillings, or thereabouts. The steamers plying on the Caledonian Canal between Inverness and Banavie had to stop at Fort Augustus for an hour or more, passing through the locks, and the passengers used to land and visit his exhibition. Passing down the Canal on my

way from the Highlands in 1859, I landed with others and was talking to him, and I remarked a fine head, which is forty-one inches wide and has eleven points. He said, "If everyone had their rights, that head belongs to Lord Lovat, for I shot the stag in his forest". Through the kindness of Mr. St. George Littledale, I got the following story of how Gordon-Cumming killed that stag. He had it from a stalker named Colin Campbell, who had it, I believe, from his father. I give it in his own words:

"The stag was spotted by the stalker in charge of the beat where the stag had his home, and, as is very often the case when you are keen on a good head, he did not get him. The stalker, after a day or two of unsuccess, was told to keep his eyes and ears open, in case Gordon-Cumming, who was in the neighbourhood, might get hold of the head. Some gentleman near by died, and the sportsman went to the funeral, giving instructions to his stalker not to go unless he saw that Gordon-Cumming went; if so he might go. Gordon-Cumming put on his Highland dress and walked along the road, when he met the stalker, who asked him what he was going to do with a rose he happened to have in his button-hole at a funeral? Gordon-Cumming replied that when everything was over he would leave him the rose. The stalker shifted his clothes, and started to the funeral. When Gordon-Cumming got round the corner he took a circuit route and made for the forest and in three hours had the head off the stag. The stalker, having heard the shot, made for the direction of the sound, where he found the carcase with the rose by its side!"

*British Deer Heads.* FRANK WALLACE

### FARQUHAR MACPHAIL

Easy and graceful were the movements of two out of that party of three as they passed along the hillside. For the hun-

dredth time I admired the elegance with which a man used all his life to steep hills can run on them. Farquhar Macphail is not a young man; some would call him old; many at his time of life would think that they had earned a right to sit in their gardens and smoke their pipes, and talk of what they had done. With beautiful ease he ran along the steep, sharp-pointed, stone-covered ground; he never seemed to hurry, and seldom cared to use his stick, which stuck out for the most part behind him, wagging like a tail.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### WILLIE ROBERTSON

Do you no ken that yon point from which the storm came, is Craig-na-gour, and that it was frae that vera tapmost hill that Willie Robertson, the auld forester, him that used to kill the outlying deer by Gaig, sung the lament? It was foreby that Beg he stood, and showed John Crerer the taps of a' the high hills from Aberdeenshire to Inverness-shire, and ca'd them by name, beginning at Tarff Forest in Atholl, and passing on to the taps of the Argyleshire hills, to those of Lochaber, Inverness, and Aberdeenshire, where he said he had spent mony a pleasant day. He turned round the tap of the hill, and disappeared. Crerer turned round a wee while after, and spied him nearly a mile aff on his way hame; he followed and overtook him, and found him sorrowful, and the tears falling from his een. He said, "I shall never see again what I hae seen the day"; and troth, he never did. He died.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### MISS MARJORIE

I was stalking once in an Inverness-shire forest where the daughter of the house was a keen stalker and a fine shot. As

we walked up to the forest on the morning of my arrival I noticed the stalker, an old friend of mine, eyeing me appraisingly. With the wisdom born of experience I remained silent. Presently I had my reward.

Said Donald in a tentative voice: "Mr. Fraank will be getting very grey!"

I admitted an undisputed fact. Silence for a bit.

"Mr. Fraank will no be thunking o' being marrit?"

I realised I was getting a bit *passé*, but hadn't thought of marriage, and said so.

"I wonder the young ladies aren't," I remarked.

This was the lead Donald was waiting for.

"Indeed it is very strange," said he. "They're awfu' bonnie young leddies too. Mon! why wull ye no be thunking o' Miss Marjorie?" In a sudden burst of confidence: "Plenty bawbees and *she can craal like a caat!*"

*Badminton Magazine.* FRANK WALLACE

### FRIDAY MORNING

At Loch Ailt Lambton shot a good hart. It was late in the day and a long way off. The shepherds went for a pony, which they described in Gaelic as being old, lazy, and without shoes; nor had they a deer-saddle, just a sack over its back, and ropes. We walked back to a late dinner, and I had a cold sirloin of beef and other delicacies rarely seen by a Highland shepherd, on the table for the men, who did not arrive till after 12 o'clock, which made it Friday morning, and therefore a Fast-day, for they were all Roman Catholics. They had nothing but a bit of oatcake since morning, and they probably never had in their lives such a treat offered, but not one of them would touch the tempting roast. After some bread and cheese and a dram, they started contentedly to return home over the wild hills by moonlight.

*Records of a Quiet Life.* COLONEL C. GREENHILL GARDYNE

## LORD CAIRNS

His household servants, keepers, and gillies all worshipped him, for he seemed to enter into their feelings, and made their troubles and difficulties his own. A mistake of his boy Arthur illustrates this. The morning chapter of the Bible read by him at family prayers contained the passage, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased". Arthur was heard afterwards explaining to his brother: "So nice of Father! *If he had said 'a beast' none of the Scotch servants would have understood him!*"

*My Happy Hunting-Grounds.* A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY

## CHARLES ST. JOHN

I became acquainted with Charles St. John in my autumn vacation of 1844, while I was Sheriff of Moray. He was then living at Invererne, below Forres, and I used to shoot sometimes on an adjoining property. We had some common friends, and messages of civility had passed between us, but we had not yet met; when one day in October I was shooting down the river side, and the islands in the Findhorn, making out a bag of partridges laboriously. It was a windy day, and the birds going off wild spoilt my shooting, which is at best uncertain. While I was on the island, two birds had gone away wounded into a large turnip-field across the river. I waded the river after them, and was vainly endeavouring to recover them with my pointers, when a man pushed through the hedge from the Invererne side, followed by a dog making straight for me. There was no mistaking the gentleman—a sportsman all over, though without any "getting up" for sport, and without a gun. I waited for him, and on coming up he said he had seen my birds pitch, and offered to find them for me if I would take up my dogs. When my pointers were coupled, he called "Grip", and his

companion, a large poodle with a Mephistopheles expression, began travelling across and across the drills, till suddenly he struck the scent, and then with a series of curious jumps on all fours, and pauses between, to listen for the moving of the bird, he made quick work with bird No. 1, and so with bird No. 2. I never saw so perfect a dog for retrieving, but he was not handsome.

After this introduction St. John and I became frequent companions. I soon found there was something in him beyond the common slaughtering sportsman; and he must have discovered that the old Sheriff had some tastes with which he could sympathise. The remainder of the season we were very much together, and often took our exercise and sport in company. On one of these occasions we went together to join a battue at Dunphail; but the weather was too bad, and after waiting for some hours without taking our guns out of their cover, St. John and I returned to Knockomie, a cottage of relations of mine near Forres, who have made it my second home for many years. We travelled in St. John's dog-cart through steady heavy rain. I was well clothed in a thick topcoat, and he in a pea-jacket of sealskins of his own shooting, so that there was no suffering from the weather as we drove down through the shelter of the Altyre woods; and the way was shortened to me by my companion telling story after story of sport and adventure, or answering with wonderful precision my questions about birds, beasts, and fishes. He stayed with me that night, and when we were alone after dinner, I broached a subject which had often come into my head since we were so much in each other's society. Why should he not give the world the benefit of his fresh enjoyment of sport—his accurate observation of the habits of animals? At first he ridiculed the idea. He had never written anything beyond a note of correspondence—didn't think he could write, etc. etc. But at length he listened to some arguments. It was very true he had too much idle

time, especially in winter—nothing he so much regretted as that he was an idle man. He had some old journals that might be useful. He could note down every day's observations, too. In short, he would try his hand on some chapters next winter. And so it came to pass, that during next winter I was periodically receiving little essays on mixed sport and natural history, which it was a great pleasure to me to criticise; and no one could take the smooth and the rough of criticism more good-naturedly than St. John. As these chapters gathered size and consistency, it became a question how to turn them to account, and this was solved by accident. At that time I was in the habit of writing an article occasionally for the *Quarterly*, and I put together one on Scotch sport, using as my material some of St. John's chapters, especially the story of the Muckle Hart of Benmore. The paper pleased Mr. Lockhart. "It would itself be sufficient" (he said) "to float any number. . . . Whether the capital journal laid under contribution be your own or another's I don't know, but everyone will wish to see more of it." I received the Editor's letter at Knockomie, and, next day, the reading of it to St. John served for seasoning as we took our shooting lunch together beside the spring among the whins on the brae of Bervie.

*Memoir. C. INNES. (Introduction to "Sport in Morayshire")*

### A VETERAN

There is a story told of a stalker of great reputation, who has now retired from the scene of his past glory in Inverness-shire, as follows. It took place some years ago, and in those earlier days men commonly stalked in the native garb, the kilt (not a very comfortable dress wherein to slide down a wet bog on a cold day, or over burnt heather sticks, or where midges abound, and it is apt to flap about in the wind and put off deer).



Our hero had made a difficult stalk, and had brought his sportsman up to within sight of the stag, which was lying down, and as they could not advance further, all laid down in the heather and waited on the stag; the stalker was lying extended flat in front, the gentleman behind him, and behind the gentleman lay the gillie, also a veteran stalker. The stalker lay still as a statue with his eyes fixed on the deer before them; nothing would have induced him to turn his head. There was a strong wind blowing from east to west, in gusts, which every now and again blew the skirt of his kilt about; this he could not see himself, but the grim old gillie behind saw it, and was apparently much scandalised and shocked at such unpardonable levity on the part of the kilt, for he knew it might put off the stag, and could not be permitted to continue at any price. He, having perfect confidence in the stalker's steadiness and sense of propriety under the awesome circumstances in which they then were, did not hesitate in carrying out the rather Spartan process by which he hoped to bring the sportive kilt into proper subjection; so, taking out the great pin which fastened his own kilt, he stretched his arm slowly across the gentleman, and stuck it through the kilt deep into a fleshy part of the stalker's body, thus imprisoning the flapping tail. The stalker never turned his head or winced, and left the pin where it had been so ruthlessly, if judiciously, planted; they had to be there some time longer, when something moved the stag, which walked away. The stalk being over, it was only then the stalker deigned to notice the incident; turning solemnly round, he addressed the gentleman and gillie in a reproachful tone, as he unpinned the refractory kilt, saying, "Wha was ut then who shtuck yon prinne in my ——?" and on being informed by the gillie why so extreme a measure had been adopted, he was satisfied, and made no further remark.

On another occasion this same stalker had been sent to the hill with two light-hearted young sportsmen, novices in the

noble art, and, therefore, not imbued with the proper respect for it. All the way up the hill these sportive youths had laughed and joked, which greatly shocked the great high priest of Diana's sense of propriety and dignity, while engaged on so serious an undertaking as deer-stalking; however, he took no notice of their want of reverence. Presently a stag was found, and the three began to stalk him. During this awesome moment, one of these ribald youths, who was behind, played some practical joke on the other, and set them both laughing. The old man caught him, and seeing they were treating it all as a good joke, he got up in great wrath, thus closing the stalk, and shouldering the rifle, he turned on his heel and walked straight home, indignantly rebuking the young gentlemen who had had so little sense of propriety as to turn a stalk into a joke with, "If you want to plaie, ye'd best awa' hame, and plaie wi' my children!"

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### OUR ARTIST

Apart from purely comparative estimates of size or weight, hill deer impress even a casual observer as built on quite a different type from the red deer which adorn our British deer parks, and this is why pictures purporting to represent hill stags seldom satisfy people who have lived much in a deer forest. The park stag, who is a good sitter, has usually served as a model for the wild stag, who declines to sit at all, and the result is necessarily fallacious, because the aspect of the two animals is altogether different. The wild stag is a poem created by the wilderness, and the artist must realise the poem before he can transfer the animal to canvas. The deserved success of Mr. V. Balfour Browne's pictorial studies of hill deer is due to the fact that he has drawn his inspiration direct from the deer forest.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

## ROBERT COLQUHOUN

As I consider this forester the finest specimen I ever met with of a Highlander of the old school, I may perhaps be allowed to mention some of his peculiarities apart from his professional avocations. His words, like his shooting, were slow, but sure to tell. When addressing his superiors, his manner was marked by the greatest courtesy, without the least approach to servility. He was well read in ancient history, knew all about the siege of Troy, and talked with the greatest interest of Hannibal's passage over the Alps. On one occasion, when several gentlemen were talking on a disputed point of history, he stepped forward, begged pardon for interrupting them, and cleared it up to their utter amazement. His memory was excellent, and nothing gave him greater delight than old traditions, legends, etc. The last time I saw him, he gave us an account of some of the Roman Catholic bishops of Scotland, with characteristic anecdotes. In politics he had his own peculiar opinions, was particularly jealous of the encroachments of the "Great Bear", as he called Russia, and thought the Allies committed an irreparable error in not partitioning France after the battle of Waterloo. No present found greater favour than the last newspaper; and it was curious to see the old man devouring its contents without spectacles.

I have seen this old man in his *eightieth year* bring down a deer *running*, and one season had some venison sent me, killed by him when ninety-one years old!

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

## HENRY EVANS OF JURA

He educated his stalkers to use their eyes in quest of facts illustrating the wild life of hill deer at all times and seasons;

and he would himself spend long hours, like the old Gaelic hunters, in lonely straths and corries, watching his deer with an eager glass, while content to pick out a stag for the larder as they fed towards him at the close of a delightful day. His quiet enthusiasm, backed by his strong personality, proved contagious and irresistible. Old hands, to whom "the echo of lead on ribs" had been the beginning and end of a deer forest, were transformed by his inspiring example into working "naturalists", and discovered a wholly new interest in their island life.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE CHIEF

The only scoldings I have ever had to give my servants were for allowing themselves to be persuaded by the "gentleman" into doing what they knew was wrong. The youngest of these men has been in my service twenty-five years, and they are all well trained by this time if a story is true (which I greatly doubt) that was told me with great glee by a friend who had tried his best to get the stalker to allow him to go after a good beast which they had spied on ground off his beat. The man replied that it was as much as his life was worth. "You mean as much as your place was worth," said my friend. "Not at all," he rejoined; "I well believe Lochiel would shoot me if I were to take you on to that hill, as he intends stalking there himself to-morrow." I was not conscious of deserving a character so ferocious.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### MR. LOSEBY

Mr. Loseby was a peculiar shooting tenant. He took a nineteen years' lease of an enormous forest, and for the last ten

years of his tenancy, though regularly paying his rent, he did not permit a shot to be fired on his ground.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE

### LORD LOVAT

Six feet in height, of handsome symmetrical build, with fine features and long auburn beard, Lord Lovat, generally attired in the Highland dress, was the *beau idéal* of a Highland chief.

His life, almost from beginning to end, was a life of sport of the best and most energising description, and it would have, perhaps, been surprising if he had not become skilled in it accordingly far above his fellow-sportsmen without the inclination and the opportunities he possessed to complete and continuous indulgence in its pleasures.

With the gun Lord Lovat had few equals, whether in grouse-, partridge-, or pheasant-shooting, and with the rifle in the deer-forest and at the range combined he would, perhaps, only have yielded the palm to one man then alive, and that man one whom he very much resembled in build and features, as well as in courtesy, kindliness, and sportsmanlike conduct—his old and intimate friend, Horatio Ross.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE

### MR. BARKER

Old Barker believed in cheap shooting for himself.

In stalking he had little to learn, for so wide was his circle of stalking acquaintances that he could visit a number of the very best forests during the short stalking season, and in this way saw more varied forest sport than the wealthiest stalker of them all. Stalking was his hobby, his distinction, even in

the whirl of London society, and he did not forget to dress up to his part. To see him walking down St. James's Street during the height of the London season in his drab tweeds and top hat, the latter the only mark of deference to the demands of society in his costume, always made one think of the deer and deer forests of the far north. He simply lived through ten months of the year, I firmly believe, in order that he might enjoy the other two months in the deer forests he loved so well.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE

### HORATIO ROSS

With either gun, rifle, or pistol, Horatio Ross was King of sporting Kings, a lifelong user of them on moor, forest, and range. And yet he was delighted to sit down with sportsmen at Snowie's establishment or elsewhere, and patiently listen to all their tales, often tedious enough in the telling, as if they were able to teach him something he did not know of Highland sport. But any sporting service he could render was always available to any sportsman visiting the Highlands who appealed to his superior knowledge and experience. One of my last meetings with this unsurpassed shot and stalker was on a fine summer afternoon, during which he was engaged for hours on the lawn of his residence on the banks of the River Ness, instructing two of his young relatives how to plant every bullet from a rook rifle in the bull's-eye of a temporary target, showing that in old age, as in youth, his ruling passion was the love of shooting, in which he was distinguished above all his compeers.

Though the only son of a Forfarshire proprietor whose estate lay about two miles from the town of Montrose, Horatio Ross was not a very wealthy sportsman. He had, however, a fortune quite sufficient for all his wants, as well as one of the

best deer forests in the Highlands for its size, which, though small, afforded him deer-stalking from the beginning to the end of the season, which he never failed to enjoy every autumn during the later portion of his long life. But the grand old sportsman enjoyed stalking his deer more than he did the shooting of them, dead-shot though he was with the rifle.

Though a wonderful target-shot, especially at the long ranges, he did not believe in taking long shots at deer. In the first place, he thoroughly enjoyed the whole stalk, and the nearer he approached his stags unseen the greater his enjoyment. One hundred and fifty yards was his outside limit of distance, but the last fifty yards' stalking, if it brought him within a hundred yards of his quarry, gave him a supreme delight.

I regard Horatio Ross, taking him all in all—physique, appearance, manner, disposition, and powers—as the finest type of a thorough all-round sportsman this country has ever produced.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE

### DONALD KENNEDY

A stronger, wirier man than Donald Kennedy it would be difficult anywhere to find, and many were the stories told in print and out of it of his various sporting feats. As a young man he was a noted poacher of the bold, roving, fearless kind then so general in the Highlands. To see him, Roualeyn Gordon-Cumming, and Horatio Ross in the street together (each with a Callaghan's deer-stalking glass slung loosely over his shoulder) was to behold three of the handsomest and strongest specimens of sporting manhood the world contained. Each of them was a sportsman to the finger-tips; though Cumming and Kennedy had to obtain their sport without the means at

the disposal of Ross, who, unlike either of the other two, had been born to a considerable fortune.

Charles St. John immortalised Kennedy by his vivid description of the poacher Ronald in *Wild Sports*, narrating some of his marvellous adventures when stalking where by law he had no right to stalk.

*Grouse Shooting and Deer-Stalking.* EVAN G. MACKENZIE





# SOME BIG STAGS



*There were giants in those days.*

GENESIS



## SOME BIG STAGS

### *THE MUCKLE HART*

I AM fortunate in being able, through the kindness of Mrs. Tindal and Admiral Gerald St. John, R.N., to give details and photographs of the most famous Scottish head which has ever been killed, probably the most famous head ever killed, at any-rate to the English-speaking world. I refer to the "Muckle Hart of Benmore", the narrative of whose death has become a classic through the magic of Charles St. John's pen.

It is a well-shaped head with thick horn, very good brow points 13 inches long, and is evidently that of an old stag. Beyond these facts it is not remarkable, and in these days it would be stretching a point to designate it a first-class trophy, though conditions were very different when this hart, "of a light red colour", as Admiral St. John writes, and scaling 30 stones, in October 1833 attained, by its death, an immortality which many a stag with more imposing antlers has failed to share.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### *COLONEL FRASER'S BIG STAG*

This was a notable stag on account of his enormous weight; he was killed by Colonel the Hon. Alastair Fraser in 1876. He had been hit in the head by a pea-rifle bullet five years before.

When killed one horn had six good points, the other was a long spike with four points, and beside this he had a third horn hanging down on his cheek about a foot long, and always covered with velvet. His weight, quite clean, was 30 stone 2 lbs., and he was probably the heaviest truly Highland stag killed for many years in the North. His haunches weighed 73 and 75 lbs.

*Badminton Library.* LORD LOVAT

### THE GUISACHAN ROYAL

Competent critics are agreed that the Guisachan Royal shot by Lord Tweedmouth forty years ago is the best head of a Scottish hill stag obtained within the last half-century. Of true Highland type, with long sharp points, heavy beam, and bold sweeping curves, it excels in every detail that goes to the making of a grand head, and will bear favourable comparison with the older forest trophies of a century ago.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### TWO BONNY BEASTS

The largest Scottish deer of the present period known to us was the last great hart shot in the forest of Glen-Fidich in the year 1831, and said to weigh thirty stones. But this stag having been killed upon a Saturday evening, was left "in the hill" until Monday morning, and then for facility of carriage being broken on the ground, his weight was only *computed* from the quarters sent to the castle. The head of this stag bears seventeen points, and is preserved in the ducal collection. Another very similar and of equal size is—or during the life of the late James Duff was—to be seen at Innes House, in the woods of which

it was killed about a year later than The Great Hart of Glen-Fidich.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE RECORD

The greatest number of points that are authenticated on a red stag is sixty-six. The head is still in existence, and was laid low by Frederick the First of Prussia, on the 18th September 1696.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

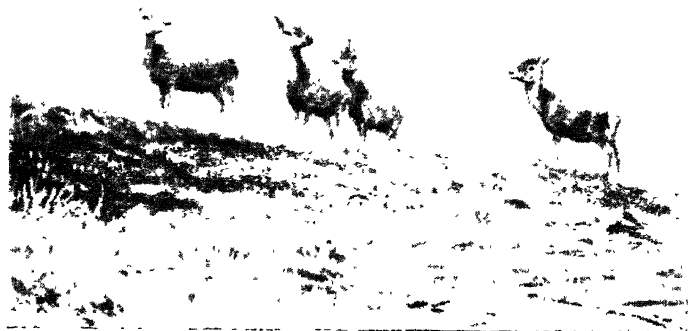
### IN FINGAL'S DAY

One day Peter had been more than usually successful in the chase, and brought home on his shoulders the carcass of a huge stag. Of this stag a leg was dressed for supper, and when it was picked bare, Peter triumphantly inquired of Ossian, "In the Fingalian days you sing about, killed you ever a stag so large as this one?" Ossian balanced the bone in his hand, then sniffing intense disdain, replied, "This bone, big as you think it, could be dropped into the hollow of a Fingalian blackbird's leg."

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH



## SOME HINDS



*The hind of the mountain, the sweet brown princess.*

DONNACHA BAN NAN ORAN





## SOME HINDS

### *THE CURSE OF HINDS*

WE left the lodge before daylight and the light was still uncertain when we reached the top of the hill. We sat down till we could see distinctly, but as soon as the objects began to come out from the twilight, we proceeded cautiously to the edge of the first little "glac"—and looking into its dim misty hollow, saw a *hind* and her calf in such a position as to prevent our advancing without her taking our wind. We were compelled therefore to sit down, and wait her pleasure. Meanwhile, the calf was picking about the brae, but in about half an hour we had the vexation of seeing him lie down comfortably opposite to his mother, to discuss his own little cud. There was every probability that they would enjoy this occupation for some hours, and therefore there was nothing to be done but to retrace our steps, descend the burn, and make a circuit of three rough miles, to arrive at a point from which we were at that moment not above three hundred yards. We had just reconciled ourselves to this determination, and MacLellan had taken a consolatory pinch of snuff, when a pack of grouse came crowing across the glen from the southern hill, and went whirring over the little hollow. As we turned our eyes, the hind and calf were both on their legs—they tried the wind, but it was behind them, and as the birds went sidelong about twenty yards to our left, the mother and son could see nothing beyond the hollow. This made the hind very uneasy; she

trotted up the wind for a few paces, then returned, then tripped down the hill for about the same distance, wheeled to the left, and cautiously stole up the slope in the direction from which the grouse had come, and on arriving at the edge of the hill, remained fixed with her eyes and ears directed down the slope, the calf close behind her, his little organs bent forward with equal attention, except that at times he looked out at the corner of his eye, and one or other of his long velvet ears turned side-long or backward, like a moving finger. For about ten minutes she watched with immovable vigilance, then suddenly passing round the shoulder of the hill, both were immediately out of sight. The forester resheathed his glass, and we continued our way to the top of the hill, but we had no sooner arrived at the summit, than, along the bare sky-line, we were aware of more than a hundred pair of pucks' ears, all bent towards us, and not above seventy yards distant. Expecting, however, that there might be other deer alarmed by the grouse, we saw them in time, dropped on the grey naked moss, and having ascertained that there were no stags, crept down the steep without discovery, and making a circle to the east, stole away by a little hollow to the rear of the hinds, and proceeded to reconnoitre the next hill.

After about an hour's stalking, we came upon the shoulder of a long slope opening to a narrow plain, on which we saw a noble sight—a herd of four or five hundred deer, among which were many very fine stags. After having feasted my eyes with this splendid sight—the illustrious cavalry of the hill, the crowned and regal array of the wilderness—I began to calculate how to make the approach, how to slip between the chain of vidette hinds, and numerous picquets of small stags, which commanded almost every knoll and hollow. In the centre of the main body, with a large plump of hinds—which he herded within a wide vacant circle—there was a mighty black hart—with a head like a blasted pine, and a cluster of points in each

crown. Though each stag of the surrounding circle had not less than ten points, there were none which approached his size, and they all kept at a respectful distance, while he marched round and round the central group of hinds. "He will have them all in the ring before long," said MacLellan; "yon's one of the old heroes of the Monadh-liath; he has not been four-and-twenty hours in the forest." I looked with an eager and longing eye at his gigantic stature, but there was no apparent possibility of approaching even the outward circle of stags. The herd was scattered over all the ground between the hills, and every little knoll and eminence had its restless picquets, and plumps of discomfited stags, which had been beaten by the great hart, and were chafing about, driving off and broding the buttocks of all the inferior stags which came in their way, then returning and staring with jealous disgust at the mighty stranger, who gave them no notice, except when one or two more audacious, or less severely beaten, made a few steps before his companions; upon which he immediately charged, drove them before him, and scattered the nearest in every direction. Upon these occasions, some hind of greater levity than the rest took the opportunity of extending her pasture, or paying her compliments to her companions—for which she immediately received a good prod in the haunch, and was turned back again into the centre.

"There is no doing anything there," said I.

"Deed no," replied MacLellan, shutting up his glass, "we be to go down to the foot of the burn."

Before resolving upon this, however, we made an attempt to cross the little glen to the north-west; but, after passing round one hill, and nearly to the top of another, we fell in with a small herd of insignificant stags, but none among them being worth the disturbance of the great herd, and being unable to pass them unobserved, we were obliged to adopt the last alternative, and descend to the Fidich. In about an hour and a half

we performed this retrogration, and, having crossed at the forester's house, ascended the burn till we again approached the deer, and, stealing from knoll to knoll, again came in sight of the herd. The outskirts of its wide circle had been much broken and deranged by the jousts and expulsions during our absence; and we saw that it was impossible to get near the better stags without taking the channel of the stream. We immediately descended into the water, and crept up the middle, sometimes compelled to crouch so low that the pools reached our hips, and, as the stones were round and slippery, it was very uneasy to proceed without floundering and splashing. At length, however, we were within the circle of the deer: there was not a breath of wind, and the least sound was audible in the intense stillness. We slipped through the water like eels, till we came to a little rock, which, crossing the burn, made a shelving fall which there was no means of passing, but by drawing ourselves up the shoot of the stream. With some difficulty I pushed my rifle before me along the edge of the bank, and then, while the water ran down our breasts, we glided up through the gush of the stream, and reached the ledge above. The return of the water, which I had obstructed, made, however, a rush and splash different from its accustomed monotonous hum, and I had scarce time to lay flat in the burn, when a *hind* sprang up within a few yards, and trotted briskly away—then another, and another. I thought that all was over, and that, in the next moment, we should hear all the clattering hoofs going over the turf like a squadron of cavalry. All remained still, however, and, in a few seconds, I saw the first hind wheel about, and look back steadily towards the fall. I was rejoiced to observe that she had not seen us, and had only been disturbed by the unusual sound of the water. She continued, however, anxious and suspicious—watched and listened—picked off the tops of the heather—then walked on, with her ears laid back, and her neck and step stiling away as stiff as if

she had been hung up in the larder for a week. This, however, was not the worst; all the surrounding *hinds* which noticed her gait gathered here and there, and stood on the tops of the little knolls, like statues, as straight as pucks, with nothing visible but their narrow necks and two peg-legs, and their broad ears perked immovably towards us, like long-eared bats. MacLellan gave me a rueful look. "Cha n-'cil comas air!" "Never mind," said I, "we shall see who will be tired first." The forester gave a glance of satisfaction, slid up his glass on the dry bank and we lay as still as the stones around us, till the little trouts, which had been disturbed by our convulsion, became so accustomed to our shapes that they again emerged from under the flat pebbles, and returned to their station in the middle of the stream, skulling their little tails between my legs with no more concern than if I had been a forked tree. At length the immobility of the hinds began to give way; first one ear turned back, then another, then they became sensible of the flies, and began to flirt and jerk as usual, and, finally, one applied her slender toe to her ear, and another rubbed her velvet nose upon her knee. It was more than half an hour, however, before, one by one, they began to steal away, perking and snuffing, and turning to gaze at the least air that whiffed about them. At length they all disappeared, except one grey, lean, haggard old grandmother of hinds, who had no teeth, and limped with one leg—probably from a wound which she received fifty, or perhaps a hundred years before I was born. Her vigilance, however, was only sharpened by age; her eyes and ears were as active as a kid's, and I have no doubt she could smell like Tobit's devil. MacLellan looked at her through his glass and he spat into the burn. The old sorceress continued to watch us without relaxation, and at last lay down on the brow of the knoll, and employed her rumination in an obstinate contemplation of the bank under which we were ambushed. There was now no alternative but

to recommence our progress up the burn; and as I was determined to circumvent the hind, I prepared for every inconvenience which could be inflicted by the opposite vexations, of a sharp, rough, slippery, and gravelly stream. Fortunately, at the place where we then were, it was so narrow, that we could hold by the heather on both sides, and thus drag ourselves forward through the water, between each of which advances I pushed my rifle on before me. In this manner we reached the turn of the water where I concluded that we should be round the shoulder of the knoll, and out of sight of the hind, who lay upon its east brow. This was effected so successfully, that, when we looked behind, we only saw her back, and her head and ears still pointing at the spot which we had left. One hundred yards more would bring us within sight of the great hart: the general position of the herd had not changed, and I hoped to find him near the central knoll of the flat, at the base of which the burn circled. We were almost surrounded by deer, the greater number being small vigilant hinds, the abomination and curse of a stalker. At length, however, we reached the knoll, and rested, to take breath, at its foot. We took a view of all around us, and, drawing ourselves cautiously out of the burn, slid up through the heather on the south side of the eminence. Scarce, however, had our legs cleared the stream, when we discovered a pair of ears not above fifteen yards from the other side. "Mo mhallachd ort!"<sup>1</sup> whispered MacLellan. She had not discovered us, however, and we glided round the base of the knoll, but on the other side lay three hinds and a calf, and I could see no trace of the great hart. On the edge of the burn, however, further up, there were five very good stags, and a herd of about thirty deer, on the slope of the north brae. All round us the ground was covered with hinds; for the prevalence of the westerly wind, during the last few days, had drawn the deer to that end of the forest. Upon the spot where

<sup>1</sup> "My curse upon you!"

I lay, though I could only see a portion of the field, I counted four hundred and seventy; and it was evident that no movement could be made upon that side. We tried again the opposite slope of the knoll; the hind which we had first seen was still in the same place, but she had laid down her head, and showed only the grey line of her back over the heather. We drew ourselves cautiously up the slope, and looked over the summit. On the other side there was a small flat moss, about seventy yards in breadth; then another hillock; and to the left two more, with little levels, and wet grassy hollows between them. Upon the side of the first knoll there were two young stags and some hinds; but the points of some good horns showed above the crest. The intervening ground was spotted with straggling hinds, and we might lay where we were till to-morrow morning, without a chance of getting near any of the good deer. While we deliberated, MacLellan thought that, by crawling with extreme caution up a wet hollow to the left, we might have a chance to approach the stags whose horns we had seen behind the other knoll, and, as nothing better could be done, we decided upon this attempt. The sun was going down and we had no more time than would give light for this venture. We slid away towards the hollow, and, drawing ourselves inch by inch, through the heather and tall thin grass, had reached the middle of the level between the hillocks, when we heard a stamp and a short grunt close beside us. I had scarce time to turn my head, and catch a glimpse of a base little grey hind who, in crossing the hollow, had stumbled upon us. It was but a moment: a rapid wheel and rush through the long grass, and I heard the career of a hundred feet going through the hollow. I sprung on my knee, and skaled a dozen small stags and hinds which came upon us full speed; for those behind, not knowing from whence came the alarm, made straight for the hill. The herd was now gathering in all directions; charging, flying, re-uniting, dispersing, and re-assembling



in utter disorder, like a rout of cavalry. I made a run for the middle knoll—two stags, with pretty good heads, met me right in the face. I did not stop to look at them, but rushed up the brae. What a sight was seen from its top!—upwards of six hundred deer were charging past—before, behind, around, in all directions. The stately figure which I sought—the mighty black hart, was slowly ascending an eminence about three hundred yards off, from whence he reconnoitred the ground below; while the disarray of stags and hinds gathered round him, like rallying masses of hussars in the rear of a supporting column. I was so intent upon the king of the forest, that I saw nothing else. At this moment I felt my kilt drawn gently; I took no notice but a more decided pull made me look round, MacLellan motioned up the slope, and I saw the points of a good head passing behind a little ridge, about eighty yards away. I looked back at the hart, he was just moving to the hill; what would I have given to have diminished a hundred and fifty yards of the distance which divided us! He passed slowly down the back of the eminence and disappeared, and the gathering herd streamed after him. “O chial! A chial!” exclaimed the forester, “bithidh è air fàlhbh!” The stag whose horns I had seen had come out from behind the ridge, and stood with his broad side towards me, gazing at the herd; but as they moved away, he now began to follow. The disappearance of the great hart, and the disappointment of MacLellan, recalled me to the last chance. I followed the retreating stag with my rifle, passed it before his shoulder, whiz went the two-ounce ball, and he rolled over headlong in the heath, on the other side of the knoll, which the next stretch would have placed between us. I looked to the hill above; the whole herd was streaming up the long green hollow in its west shoulder, headed by “the mighty of the desert”. They rounded and passed the brow, and sloped upward on the other side, till the forest of heads appeared bristling along the sky-line of the

summit. In a few moments afterwards, as the sun was going down upon Scur-na-Lapaich, and the far western hills of Loch Duaich, the terrible wide forked tree came out in the clear eastern sky on the top of the hill, and crowding after it at least two hundred heads, crossing and charging, and mingling, their polished points flashing in the parting sunbeams. The herd continued to file along the ridge of the hill, and wheeling below the crest, countermarched along the sky-line, till their heads and horns slowly decreased against the light. The forester waved his hand to the hill, "Erich! erichibh!" cried he. "Away! away to the hill, red heroes of the mountain! You have lost one of the mighty to-day, he shall never again ascend the hill, his bed is in the cold moss of the glen, the thunder shall wake him no more!"

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### A TRICKY JADE

By raising my head I had attracted the attention of a hind which a minute before had been quietly feeding. She kept steadily gazing in my direction for a considerable time, and, peering through the grass, I gazed at her. After a time she commenced to feed, but after taking a bite or two, she, quick as lightning, raised her head and gazed again. On two occasions she walked forward a few yards, as if determined to make certain whether I was a hidden foe. Again she resorted to the trick of pretending to feed and suddenly raising her head. I knew this habit, and was prepared for it. I kept perfectly still, in order that she might become satisfied that she was the victim of an optical illusion. How long she would have gazed I had no means of knowing, as John, by pressing my leg, indicated that the stag was up.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

*MAKING A MOCK OF HER*

I once, in the woods at Gordon Castle, lost a fine stag, for laughing at a hind who came to look at me while I was waiting for him. He was grazing down a brae, where I could not stalk him; but as he was feeding in a direction which promised to bring him within range, if I remained where I was, I planted myself against an old birch-tree, and stood there for some time, as straight as one of its own ribs. While I was patiently watching the nibbling progress of the stag, I attracted the observation of an inquisitive hind, which, passing within sight of the tree, seemed struck with the indefinite change of appearance in its rind. She stole cautiously forward, with her neck and ears stretched out, and occasionally bowing to the old stock, as if it had been an oak and she a Druidess, but which, in reality, proceeded from her eager desire to strain a decided sight or scent out of my equivocal stripe against the tree. Having come within a disagreeable ocular suspicion of me, she suddenly trotted off; but, having no conviction by scent, again doubtful, advanced, snuffing, staring, and stretching her inquisitive ears, until she was so close that I could see her eyes wink, and her dewy nose screw like a guinea-pig's, when, unable to keep my gravity at the faces which she was making, I laughed, but without any *éclat*, or even a convulsion in my shoulders, but, as I suppose, merely an expansion of my countenance, and perhaps an exposure of my teeth. Instantly, however, she started, as if I had fired my rifle in her face, went round like a dervish, and down the brae with an alarm which immediately startled the stag, and took him away after her.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART



HINDS IN THE WAY



*AN OLD HIND*

Hinds display considerable intelligence at times, and if, when stalking, you happen to alarm one of these suspicious females, you are in for a bad time.

A friend of mine had a very intimate acquaintance with a hind of this nature. She was very well known to the stalkers, both on account of her marvellous cuteness and her light colour. She always kept about the same place, and finally got to be a great nuisance. One day my friend was watching his host stalk a certain stag who was lying on top of a knoll surrounded by hinds, the old yellow beast amongst them. The stalking party were making their slippery way along the course of a deep burn, well out of sight of the deer, when they had the misfortune to put up an ousel. Now the ousel is not a large bird, and this particular one went off with very little noise, close to, but unnoticed by, most of the deer. Not so our old yellow friend, who really seemed to be gifted with almost human intelligence. She first looked hard at the bird, and then at the burn from which it had come. She, of course, could see nothing. At this stage of the proceedings most hinds would have walked mincingly to the edge of the burn, looked over, barked, and then made tracks for the nearest sky-line, followed by the rest of the deer. However, she knew a trick worth two of that. Without alarming the other deer, she quietly sneaked off into the wood and, having made a detour, came up in the rear of the suspected spot. The stalking party, all unconscious of her presence, were of course, in full view. Having first satisfied herself by a prolonged stare that the nasty crawling things in the burn were up to no good, she noiselessly went back the way she had come and joined the other deer. She uttered no sound and, so far as a good eye at the end of a spyglass could see, gave no sign, yet the fact remains that the whole herd of

deer dashed off at a breakneck pace and did not stop until they reached a place of safety. Then, indeed, it was "that dommed auld beast" with a vengeance!

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE SILVER LADY OF FANNICH

I was examining some deer lying below me at the foot of a rock in Corrie Bheag, when I noticed a hind among them; she was not white like a sheep, but was as though her skin were covered with silver threads; she was silver white, with a faint blush of red on her ribs, a distinct line of black extended from her head to her tail, black eyes, black-tipped ears, nose, and hoofs, with a little colouring on the frontlet between her eyes. She was a very extraordinary and beautiful creature. I often saw her afterwards, and made very exact notes of her appearance. The Fannich men were under the impression she was the old "white Lady of Braemore", which was changing her colour (quite against natural probabilities) and getting red as she got older!

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### "WELL DONE, OLD LADY!"

One lovely morning in September 1888, I sailed up in the boat to the west end of Loch Fannich. I found Campbell the stalker waiting for me, accompanied by a gang of men who had been working on the road to Loch Rosque. These men were on their way to Ullapool, but, instead of going straight on by the public path through the middle of my forest, as they had the right to do, they had been civil enough to wait till I arrived, and then come with me, so that they would not disturb deer if there were any *en route*. Having thanked them for

their civility, we at once started towards the Braemore march, the direction in which they were going. When we had got as far as the Fox's Den Corrie, opposite the Flucht Corrie, I suddenly became aware of a large herd of deer high up above me. I tumbled off my nag into the heather and we all went flat; having "spied" them, we found nothing very good among them, and were about to proceed forward, when a magnificent golden eagle from the peaks of Corrie Mohr swooped down at the herd, trying to strike a calf. He was a splendid eagle. I have never seen so large a one, and I never saw a bird in such perfect and brilliant plumage. He missed the calf, but, wild with terror, away rushed the whole herd straight down the precipitous slopes of the corrie, and in our direction. I snatched the rifle out of its case to be ready, but soon put it back again; for the eagle, having missed the calf, wheeled up in the air screaming, and was after them in a minute; and again he singled out the calf, now straining every nerve to keep up with its terrified dam in her flight. This turned the herd from us, which scampered back up the rugged rocks as fast as they had come down. I never saw terror better illustrated: up and down, backwards and forwards, did the poor beasts go, the eagle after them; but he would not be denied—he had made up his mind to have that calf, and as he was always able to cut the herd off, in whichever direction they fled, he at last separated the hind and her calf from the rest of the deer. Now the chase became hotter and more exciting than ever. The panting herd, having a moment's respite, stood at gaze, watching the wild efforts of the hind to save her calf from the deadly clutch of the monarch of the air; constantly turning her head, she kept a watchful eye on her tormentor; she managed to dodge him yet for some time, though he made several ineffectual dashes at the calf. But, done at last, and utterly exhausted by her vain efforts to elude the attacks of the eagle, she took refuge against a pile of wild rocks tumbled down from the peaks above.



There maternal courage and despair determined her to make her last stand in defence of her offspring, which, half dead from the hunt and its terror, cowered behind its mother, bleating piteously, while all the little ones of the herd joined in the sad chorus.

The eagle, in close pursuit, came sailing with outstretched motionless pinions down the wind straight at her—awful moment of suspense and excitement to all of us who were looking on—we made sure he would get the calf now. But no! the gallant old hind, panting and exhausted though she was, made one last fight for it. Well done, old lady! Well and gallantly done indeed! For, as in full swoop the eagle made a dash at her, up she went on her hind legs, and struck at him in the most vicious way with her sharp fore-hoofs, and it was with difficulty that he dodged the blow. Baffled, finally he soared up the corrie, screeching in his wrath. This was the finest episode of wild nature I ever witnessed on the hill. I had my glasses on them and could see every detail. The expression of despair and wild terror, combined with that of the most thorough vixen, on the face of the agonised mother; her ears laid flat to her neck, when she made that savage slap at her enemy, cannot be described—it must have been seen. The gang of men were in the greatest excitement, and I observed that, had they not been so civil as to wait for me, they would have missed one of the finest sights they were ever likely to see in their lives on the hills of the Highlands.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

# RED-LETTER DAYS

*Who hath believed our report?*

ISAIAH



## RED-LETTER DAYS

### *THE ROYAL*

THE edge of the wood was close at hand, for not 150 yards from where we lay a rugged old fir raised its leafless branches. Rubbing his shoulder gently up and down, completely hidden save for his haunch, was the big stag.

"He'll give you a chance directly," said Donald. I could see the left horn, though the right was still hidden. Brow, bay, tray, and three on top, all long and well formed. His neck worked gently up and down, and I knew his eyes were half shut. Then the gentle rubbing ceased, and round the edge of the trunk came his other horn.

I heard Donald grunt, and a long "Aah!" The right horn was an exact duplicate of the left. Then the whole head emerged, and though its shape was spoiled by the narrow span, I knew I had before me a royal whose equal I had never seen alive. And I could do nothing!

One step to the left, half a turn, and there was a good chance of his being mine. But that one step for which I prayed was never taken. He suddenly left the tree, walked quickly and decisively stern on towards the wood, and vanished.

"Take the nine-pointer," whispered the tempter. "A grand chance."

"I'm hanged if I do!" I retorted. "I'll have that stag or none. Quick! Round into the wood."

"Mon! they'll get the wind," gasped the startled Donald.

"We must risk that," I rejoined. "Quick—this way!"

Flat as our ancient enemy, we slithered back out of sight, doubled round, and peered cautiously through a tuft of heather. The nine-pointer stood as he had before, within fifty yards of us. The knobber faced us a bare thirty. Unpleasantly cool, the breeze fanned my left cheek, and no sign could I see of the royal.

"Back!" I hissed over my shoulder.

Round we went, still behind a knoll, rolled and scrambled to the top of the gully, which, as it entered the wood, widened again into an open flat through the centre of which trickled the burn below the birches. A huge dead fir-tree sprawled broken white arms in the heather on the far side; but it was not at these I looked, but at the royal whose splendid tops gleamed in the last rays of the sun. He was stern on. I hope it was not unsportsmanlike. Three steps and he would have been lost. His head came slowly round. Regardless of everything, I fired and became dimly aware of a heavy hand patting my back and Donald's ecstatic eulogies in my ear.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### A JOYOUS DAY

During the war, it amused a young officer, at home on short leave from the front in France, to test on stags a .600 cordite rifle with which he had been demolishing German snipers at the Hohenzollern Redoubt. The rifle weighed 15 lbs. and kicked like a horse, but that was part of the fun. He took the hill at two o'clock, and late in the evening espied a band of stags at feed on the green summit of a rounded hill which precluded a near approach. At an apparent range of 300 yards he shot one of the stags through the heart, and, making a quick

sprint to cut across their line of flight, he shot a second stag through the head as they cantered past him at close range. Anxious to exhibit his trophies that same night, he cut the heads off both stags, and carried them home on his shoulders across the hill, arriving quite unconscious that he had accomplished a feat which few stalkers, professed or otherwise, would care to attempt.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE SHOOTING OF PETER THE GREAT

He was by far the biggest stag I have ever seen on the hill; he had a large wild head, stout and long in the beam, and eight wild points branched therefrom—viz., brow, tray, and a great fork on the top. As he lay there he looked like a whale among minnows.

Turning to MacMillan, I whispered into his ear, "I shall spend the whole day after yon monster, Donald, and we will place our time entirely at his disposal." Donald, however, was anxious to get in at him, and was for going round Glashven Vor, and coming in above them from the other side; but I flatly refused to take my eyes off such a stag for a minute. I then determined we would, one at a time, try to cautiously work in nearer to them from where we then were, and if we arrived at the point selected, wait there till they moved. After carefully examining the ground for a hundred yards, I thought I could manage it, and very slowly I wriggled my way till I got within two hundred yards of them; then Donald followed me. Thence, if the worst came to the worst, I could at all events try my luck.

We had not occupied our new position long, and I was cogitating a fresh advance, when the top stag got up and walked west, up wind; then soon after, one after the other, up

got the rest of them and began to move away. We waited no longer where we were, and I made for some rocks nearer to the herd, and commanding their line of march. Hardly had I reached this point when I found myself face to face with two small stags which had been put on the flanks of the herd. They saw me, but I was without motion, and the little fools could not make me out, though staring straight at me. I was in terror, and I can never pardon those two brutes for the fright they gave me during those few minutes, while I was earnestly praying that the big stag would come into sight before they had made me out. "Thank goodness!" I mentally ejaculated, "here he comes at last!" and, moving along like a gigantic man-of-war over Atlantic waves, with a sort of rolling camel-like gait, his huge forks towering above his company, he came into my sight; he did look splendid. He was moving three-quarters away from me, partly showing his haunches. "Oh-h-h! tak yer time, tak yer time, Cornel," whispered Donald, in the bluest fright he ever was in in all his stalking experience. My intense anxiety seemed to string my nerves, and the exigency of the moment made me steady. I was obliged to wait on him a short time, to let the other stags get clear of him; but the two small beasts which had seen me began to trot towards the rest of the herd, and all commenced moving three-quarters away at a good pace. As he cleared himself for a second, finding myself steady on him, I fired. "Habet!" I cried, as the fine fellow stopped, and, straddling out his legs, waddled away from his fellows, who disappeared over the nearest sky-line as fast as they could.

We did not show ourselves, but gave him time, for we knew he was a dead stag, and he soon passed slowly from our sight. Then, having got the dogs up in case of accidents, we moved up to him; but there was no need of either dogs or further shots, for there, ten yards beyond the ridge over which he had crawled from our view, we saw the big forks in the heather—

all was over. We christened him Peter the Great, and his mighty head still hangs in the smoking-room at Balmacaan. He weighed 21 stone 2 lbs., the heaviest stag ever shot in the open forest here, though Lord Bury shot one a stone heavier *in the wood* some years before. "Peter the Great" was shot exactly in the right place: entering the ribs on the right side, the bullet crossed diagonally, and passed through the heart, lodging in the skin on the left side. He was in splendid larder condition. I was a proud sportsman that night when I entered the dining-room, rather late for dinner, with an eleven-pointer 15½ stone and a huge eight-pointer of 21 stone 2 lbs. as my day's sport.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### THE LUCK OF IT

Yes, by all the gods, there he was, after all, the very Lust of my eye—hope renewed when already half abandoned—a true Royal stag with a glorious spread of antlers, and even in length of horn hardly, if at all, inferior to the despised switch. At first, the stalk presented neither incident nor special difficulty until we had reached a point within some 400 yards of our quarry with his harem of a dozen hinds. Beyond that point not another inch could we advance by reason of another stag—an eight-pointer, with a numerous retinue—discovered lying asleep in an intervening hollow. There we were constrained to lie, inactive among the heather, in hopes that the intruder might awake and go. He did neither and the afternoon wore on. At length, I suggested our withdrawal, leaving the Royal undisturbed, and returning hither with the first of the morning's light. No, that plan was negated at once. "I've been on the hill every day of the season," replied Matthew, "and never before seen a stag the like of yon. He's a traveller and by the morn's morn may be forty miles away. It's now or



never. . . ." Another half-hour passed. The light was beginning to fade. I tried another gesture! "Matthew, not being gifted with crepuscular vision, unless I can get a shot within the next half-hour. . . ." Then a fresh light was vouchsafed. "D'ye no ken that yon beast's just going *down the ravine*? Half the hinds are intil't already and the rest are making to follow. . . ." a pause: then, "Can you *run*, when I give the word? . . ." "Run? Aye, like a redshank." N.B.—This was thirty years ago. But the "ravine"? Remember that I had not the faintest suspicion of there being a ravine at that spot, nor was any evidence of such a geological phenomenon indicated from our point-of-view. Implicitly, of course, I accepted the thrice welcome information. Five minutes elapsed. "*Jump*", said Matthew, and we jumped. We must have covered 300 yards out of those 400, what time a trained sprinter would have done the quarter-mile. Then the *triple tops* of those great antlers appeared slowly emerging from the gully. Close in front was a heathery hummock and upon this I flung myself flat on my chest ere yet the stag's whole head had appeared.

Here I ought to interpolate that my brother W. and the gillies, whom we had left a mile behind, afterwards declared that from the moment we began our run, the whole hillside above was *amove* with galloping deer—"like the beasts coming out of Noah's Ark!"

Well, our great stag disdained to run. Majestically he moved forward to another hummock and, from the top of that, gazed deliberately around to ascertain what all the commotion meant. The scene at that moment passes any words of mine to convey; but remains engraved for ever on the tablets of memory—that noble stag, standing high and four-square on his hillock, his brave figure outlined *cuadrado y esquinado* against the afterglow of a setting sun—not Landseer himself can have envisaged a more imposing sight.

The distance was ninety yards and the .450 bullet struck fair

on the point of the shoulder. That stag never felt a pang. He carried his full Royal rights and his horns measured a yard in length, all but a paltry quarter-inch—a vulgar fraction! The circumference above bay was  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches and the spread inside  $25\frac{1}{2}$  inches. But are not all these details chronicled in Rowland Ward's *Records of Big Game* (fourth edition), wherein my one Scottish Royal ranks twelfth in the list for all Scotland, posing alongside the trophies of the mightiest and noblest hunters of the Highlands! Truly for a man out on his first day in a Scottish forest to encounter such an exceptional specimen was the sort of luck one may dream of, but rarely realise.

*Retrospect.* ABEL CHAPMAN

### “HURRAH! HURRAH!”

Home was reached a little before nine o'clock, as our progress in the dark was very slow. I now began to see why no one else had volunteered for the day's sport. To get up at five o'clock, ride twenty-four miles, and stalk all day on ground lying mostly at an angle of forty-five degrees, would be quite enough for most of us three days a week. A hot tub, a good dinner, and I was soon feeling fresh again. My host came and smoked a cigar with me while I ate and told him of my adventures, and how delighted I had been with my day.

We were chatting merrily away when the door opened, and almost unnoticed I found the butler standing by my side with a small silver waiter.

“Telegram for you, sir; the cart was down for supplies to-day, and brought this from the station, sir.” The Leger, and the fact that it was run that day, had been till that moment clean forgotten. Tearing it open—again hurrah! hurrah! Craigmillar first—and had not one of the safest and most courteous of bookmakers laid me a thousand to one hundred

and fifty against him! This was indeed a red-letter day—my first stag had “come off”, my plunge had “come off”! Reader, what more can I say?—good spirits are catching, and long and loud the laughter rose in the smoking-room that night.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### A FLUKE

Surely that little boy with a rook-rifle, surely he is someone from another life, not my own, and yet he is somehow familiar, and, on this September day, the dark pine wood in which he stands seems familiar too. And seventy yards off, through the great sun-flecked aisles of timber, move certain elegant shapes. My small boy wots not of the Dryads and Oreads beloved of the woodland Pan, and, under no misapprehensions therefore, ups and lets drive at the leading roe, missing her—for it is a doe—by yards. Off go the lovely galloping things, white rumped, prodigiously bounding and (quick!) in goes another cartridge—*that's* the buck, fat as butter, brown and shiny as a freshly opened horse-chestnut—*bang* again and, once more, the echoes of the heavy black powder roll and linger among the pines and—well, I expect it *must* have been myself who fired those shots, else how should I know that the bullet broke the spine about a foot below the buck's ears, and that the rifle stood a space in that special paradise reserved for little boys who have just brought off flukes?

*The Frequent Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

### “CLUBFOOT”, THE SPYING

A sudden perturbation now possesses Donald, several times monosyllables in the unknown tongue escape him, to all appearance involuntarily, in alternate tones of surprise, doubt,

incredulity, astonishment and finally of awe-stricken certainty. Then, after some unintelligible confidences to Archie, he turns to me, and in deep, reverential tones, a sort of conversational "dim religious light", he almost falters out—Highlander as he is and unaccustomed to bad grammar—the illiterate exclamation, "It's him!" "Who?" "What?" I enquire more with my eyes than my tongue, for I am utterly at a loss for the cause of this sudden change from his casual calmness. "It's 'Clubfoot' himself!" he tremulously replies.

*Sport. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT*

### "CLUBFOOT", HIS DEATH

At last—oh, how long it was!—we reach the more uneven ground, and can actually assume a sitting posture, a blessed relief, and Donald lays down my rifle against the bank and whispers his request that I shall stop there "for a while". He wishes to reconnoitre alone. I assent, as I do to everything he proposes. It may be humiliating—and I rather feel that it is so—to abnegate all one's rights and independent action in this way; to become a dummy, a machine, a mere component part of General Donald's attacking force, a piece of artillery to be kept in rear or hidden, and only to be used when he chooses to call me into action. I feel all this, but the stake is so large; I am playing for "Clubfoot", and I dare not take the game out of Donald's hands, knowing as I do how skilfully he plays it; otherwise in an ordinary stalk I require to see the cards a good deal more plainly than I am doing here. So he departs, and is absent about twenty minutes, while I, with the aid of a silent match, indulge in a pipe.

On his return, which he accomplishes so noiselessly that he is within three yards of me before I hear him, he informs me that there are some very fine stags below that we could "get in" at, but that "Clubfoot" is not among them. He however

is, no doubt, below the ridge, out of sight, and when Archie, who he can tell by the movements of the lowest deer has already commenced operations, shows himself a little more, he will move up to us. Anyhow, we must now be going; so, taking up the rifle, he brings my heart into my mouth by drawing it half out of its cover, and then as soon as we emerge from my shelter we assume the all-fours' formation and half crawl, half slide down a gentle slope for some distance, till a dwarf forest of horns appears, as though stuck in the ground, in our front.

After some consideration, and looking well all round him, Donald inclines a little to his right and reaches a very slight undulation, in which we are rather better concealed, and with a gentle forward beckon of his finger summons me to his side, and—oh, moment of anxious delight!—hands me the rifle, for which I clear away a sort of embrasure out of the coarse grass and moss before me. I await my chance. "Tak time when they rise, sir," whispers Donald, with his mouth close to my ear; "don't fire till I show him." I nod assent and then we wait, and wait; often do we gently and imperceptibly shift the pressure of our bodies from one side to the other to gain relief from the crampy sensation which a long continuance in the attitude of prone recumbency is apt to create, and we are just beginning to wonder whether Archie has made a mistake, when at last the long-expected move occurs; head after head, broadside after broadside stand revealed. They are all looking down the hillside, evidently watching the disturbed deer below, all but one—a grand stag with a royal head, who is standing and looking towards us—a most tempting three-quarters' broadside shot, not eighty yards off. "Shall I take him?" I whisper to Donald, with the sight of my rifle steady on the right place. "Well," he slowly replies, with the tail of his eye, as I feel sure, anxiously searching for the appearance of "Club-foot" on the scene, "that's a splendid stag!" As the last word

leaves his lips my finger presses the trigger, and, with a start and a bound, he gallops frantically past us up the hill. Of the rest of the herd, some scamper along the ridge, apparently in doubt whether to go up or down; some stand still, and while I am hurriedly asking Donald as to the effect of my shot, he interrupts me with the excited exclamation, "Quick, sir, quick! the other barrel! There he is! That's 'Clubfoot'!" and sure enough, in all his broadside bulk and widespread dignity of horn, easily distinguishable, exalted above his fellows, this preternatural hero passes before me on the edge of the ridge at a steady trot, giving me an easy chance within the 100 yards. I fire, but miss, of course—who can prevail against enchantment? "Load quickly, sir!" says Donald in a frenzy of excitement, and with his aid two cartridges are soon in the rifle, which he then snatches from my hand. "This way! we must run for it, but we'll have another chance yet!" and we *do* run! first along the ridge to the left, keeping just above it, "Club-foot" having run below it. Then Donald suddenly halts and plunges back at me. "Tur-r-n back! this way! this way!" and darts down the brae in a slanting direction to the right. I follow as I best can, a rough descent enough, sliding, not to say tumbling, down the heather, jumping over ugly chasms, progressing at full speed over ground difficult at ordinary times to traverse at a walk—of course, it is all or most of it downhill—still I can hardly understand my own activity and fleetness. The wings of Mercury seem attached to my feet, and I fly over the ground as one does in a dream. My blood is up now, and I thoroughly understand Donald's tactics, for I can see the deer travelling below us on our left, cleverly headed back by Archie from crossing to the opposite side of the corrie, and I see the point Donald is making for—a knoll below us which will command the spot where the foremost deer have already crossed a small burn, and where, consequently, "Club-foot", who is well in the rear, is sure to cross too.

Panting, I reach the knoll and throw myself down on the soft moss beside the rifle which Donald has already placed ready for me with the barrel protruding down the steep hillside. "Tak time—Tak time, sir!" he exhorts. "That's not him!" he almost shrieks, as I seem about to shoot at one of the minor deer, but I am only judging the distance by the sight of the rifle on the beasts as they pass. "He's last but one!"—No fear! I know him well—and although a galloping shot at about 180 yards is not quite so easy as one trotting at under 100, under which circumstances I had just missed him, I have a sort of bloodthirsty confidence in myself this time, and as he comes by at last, lolloping along through the burn at an easy canter with his great broadside full to me, I fire—and miss again! "Behind and over him!" mutters Donald in a tone of despair—but I heed him not; I knew it, he had just dipped downwards going into the burn as I pulled, and I take the sight just before his shoulder and fire the second barrel as he mounts the bank out of it, and when he appears—as galloping deer will do sometimes—to be almost standing still. "That's in him!" shouts Donald in a very different tone; another stride and he reels half backwards. "He's down!" follows as a comparative, and when the next moment I see the renowned "Clubfoot" with his heels kicking in the air, a thunderous "He's dead!" comes as a superlative from the now frantic Donald, who, exhorting me to load again and follow him, "in case", darts down the hillside with prodigious bounds, gripping for his knife as he goes. I load and follow, but my services are not needed; no "in case" occurs. Before I get half-way down I see Donald savagely occupied with his knife at the veteran's chest, and the grand historic head at rest on the mossy ground. When I arrive on the spot, Donald's face positively blows and effervesces with delight and pride, and I am conscious of an increased deference in his demeanour towards myself, which, though there never was any previous lack of respect on

his part, is on the whole, I cannot deny it, rather pleasant to me.

*Sport. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT*

### *"CLUBFOOT", THE RETURN TRIUMPHAL*

Both stags are soon mounted and scientifically strapped on the ponies, and after a few struggles with soft ground we attain the comparative solidity of the springy hill path, and "down the shaggy side", we "wind with joyous march our glad array". I know of no more comfortable sensation or position than after a good day's work with a happy result, to quietly stroll down the hill, smoking the pipe of contentment, following your spoil, whose branching heads your eye hardly ever bears to leave, as they undulate from side to side with the motion of the ponies that carry them. This is, I say, delight enough on ordinary occasions, but on this one—with the story I have to tell when I get home!—and how much has this to do with all our sport!—I am in that often-quoted, but rather vague locality, the "Seventh Heaven", and there, if the reader can imagine and consent to occupy such a position, I will leave him.

*Sport. W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT*

### *DEATH OF THE RED STAG*

Few people excepting deer-stalkers know the luxury of standing upright, after having wormed oneself horizontally along the ground for some time. There were the horns with their white tips still motionless, excepting when he turned back his head to scratch his hide, or knock off a fly. I now walked forward without stooping till I was within three or four hundred yards of him, when I was suddenly pulled up by



finding that there was no visible manner of approaching a yard nearer. The last sheltered mound was come to; and although these mounds from a distance looked scattered closely, when I got amongst them I found they were two or three rifle-shots apart at the nearest. There was one chance still: a rock or rather stone lay about eighty yards from the stag, and it seemed that I might make use of this as a screen, so as, if my luck was great, to get at the animal. I took off my plaid, laid it on the ground, and ordered the dog to lie still on it; then buttoning my jacket tight, and putting a piece of cork, which I carried for the purpose, into the muzzle of my rifle to prevent the dirt getting into it, I started in the most snake-like attitude that the human frame would admit of. I found that by keeping perfectly flat, and not even looking up once, I could still get on unobserved. Inch by inch I crawled: as I neared the stone my task was easier, as the ground sank a little and the heather was longer. At last I reached the place, and saw the tips of his horns not above eighty yards from me. I had no fear of losing him now; so, taking out the cork from my rifle, I stretched my limbs one by one, and prepared to rise to an attitude in which I could shoot; then, pushing my rifle slowly forward, I got the barrel over the stone unperceived, and rose very gradually on one knee. The stag seemed to be intent on watching the face of the opposite hill, and, though I was partially exposed, did not see me: his attitude was very favourable, which is seldom the case when a stag is lying down; so, taking a deliberate aim at his shoulder, I was on the point of firing, when he suddenly saw me, and, jumping up, made off as hard as he could. He went in a slanting direction, and before he had gone twenty yards I fired. I was sure that I was steady on him, but the shot only seemed to hurry his pace; on he went like an arrow out of a bow, having showed no symptom of being hurt beyond dropping his head for a single moment.

I remained motionless in despair: a more magnificent stag I had never seen, and his bright red colour and white-tipped horns showed me that he was the very animal I had so often seen and wished to get. He ran on without slackening his pace for at least a hundred yards, then suddenly fell with a crash to the ground, his horns rattling against the stones. I knew he was perfectly dead, so, calling the dog, ran up to him.

Having duly admired and examined the poor stag, not without the usual compunction at having put an end to his life, I set to work, bleeding and preparing him for being left on the hill till the next day, secure from attacks of ravens and eagles; then, having taken my landmarks so as to be sure of finding him again, I started on my march to the shepherd's house, looking rather anxiously round at the increasing length of my shadow and the diminished height of the sun; as I had to pass some very boggy ground with which I was not very well acquainted. I had not gone a quarter of a mile, however, when I saw the shepherd himself making his way homewards. I gave a loud whistle to catch his attention, and, having joined him, I took him back to show the exact place where the stag was lying, to save myself the trouble of returning the next day. Malcolm was rather an ally of mine, and his delight was great at seeing the stag.

"Deed aye, sir; it's just the muckle red stag himsel'; mony a time I've seen the bonny beast. Save us! how red his pile is!"

"Yes, he is a fine beast, Malcolm; and you must bring your grey pony for him to-morrow. I must have the head and one haunch down to the house: take the rest to your mother; I dare say she can salt it."

*Sport in Morayshire.* CHARLES ST. JOHN

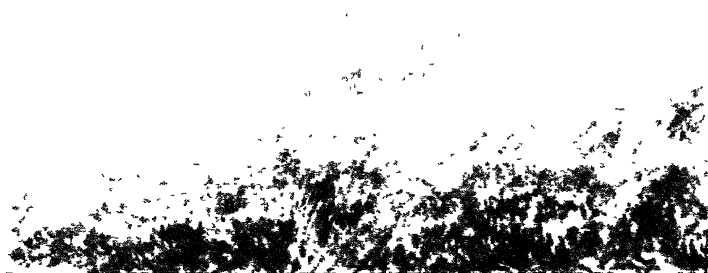
*THE BEST DAY OF ALL*

The beat was nearly over, and I was thinking that there were less pleasant ways of finishing a blank day than sitting in fern on a rock high in a wood, looking out over scores of miles of hills and trees, when there was a rustle and a trampling, and down the path through the birch-trees came trotting two hinds and a calf. They slowed to a walk, and came up the green fair-way, with the sunlight on them thirty yards away from me. They walked, cropping the grass, round the rock beyond. There was silence; I thought it was the end. Then another trampling, and down the pass came a stag. He was a small beast with a poor head, and he was followed by another, which was also small, and not clean. They trotted up the pass thirty yards away.

And after them came three more, with the best, I hoped, last. And he was the best, a good eight-pointer with long tines. But he was coming towards me, and the other two shielded him. The sunlight dropping through the birch leaves dappled their coats. And I waited for them to follow as the others had gone, thirty yards away, a broadside shot. I waited. And I saw their horns, the tips of their tines, suddenly running under the ledge of the rock on which I was sitting, five or six yards away. It was only for a moment; I realised they were not going as the others had gone. I jumped up to get to the edge of the rock, and they had galloped round the rock itself, away back, out of sight, gone. . . . But I had seen them under the birches with the sunlight bright on their necks, dappling their coats. I had all the luck, and had not fired a shot.

*Field, River and Hill.* ERIC PARKER

# DANGERS, DIFFICULTIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS



*There was never a game that was worth a rap  
For a rational man to play  
Into which no accident, no mishap  
Could possibly find a way.*

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON

*Then stiffen your legs and brace your back and take my word it's true,  
If the man in front has got you weak he's just as tired as you,  
He can't attack through a gruelling fight and finish as he began,  
He's done more work than you to-day, you're just as good a man;  
So summon your last reserves of pluck—he's careless with his chin—  
You'll put it across him every time. Go in! Go in! Go in!*

"KLAXON"



## DANGERS, DIFFICULTIES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

### THE GROUSE

OH Puck! Puck! why didst thou place that officious bird in that particular spot to scare away the deer? Was there no other place in all this wide forest where he could set his breast? A thousand, ten thousand there are, where surely he might have been as happy; it was a chance as one to a million: see what a pickle we are in; mark what we have done, what endured! But thou delightest in mischief, and art grinning, I know, thou impious little elf, and, *maledetto che tu sia*, wert never better pleased in all thy life. The deer, thus warned, broke over the hill, and the moor-cock went darting away, turning himself sideways to catch the gale with his wing, chuckling, and rejoicing, as it were, in his free flight and the success of his mischief.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### A SWIM UNREWARDED

There was an old and mighty hart in the forest of Glen-Garrie; when we knew him he had generally thirteen points in his head, and he had probably had as many for the preceding half-century. Like all other extraordinary stags, he seemed to

have a charmed life; he had been stalked, driven, shot at, but with no more success than if he had been one of those ghosts of stags, which, having been dismissed by Orion in this world, had descended to afford immortal sport to his soul in the next. We have risen by starlight to wait him at his feeding before dawn, and when the dawn broke, there was nothing on the shealing but a brocket or a hind; and we have stalked for him all a summer's day, and it was only at the gloaming that we got sight of his mighty head in a breach of the mist, standing on the summit of the cairn against the last streak of light. His slot has been tracked into the wood, and when it was beaten, nothing has been seen but a "wood-cat"—or he has slipped out at a pass where a fat "dubh-gall" lay asleep behind a stone, while the rest of the "guns" were watching like lynxes. A boy has tumbled over him in the brackens, and the deadly hand of Uisdean Mor snapped a false cap upon him at thirty yards. If he was in the hill, the cloud came down, and if beyond the Garrie, the river was in flood. There was a day, however, when the cloud and the river would not have saved him. We had our hunting-quarters in the—then—little black hut of Toman-donn, and, on the preceding night, news had been brought in by the black forester, that his slot had been seen entering a small wood among the braes on the south side of the river, where the number of his tracks indicated that he had kept "harboury" for some days. In the morning when we looked out, the clouds were down to the roots of the hills, and the Garrie was rolling in an impassable flood; the boat destined to ferry us across was surrounded by a wide sheet of water which rendered her inaccessible. Few of the inland Highlanders can swim, and the only one of the beaters who could, declared that it was impossible to reach the boat from the danger of being swept away into the rapids below. We went out to the water. The coble was dancing like a black cork on the sweeping current, from which a new lake had spread out upon the

strath. To those unaccustomed to struggle with a sea surf it might seem impossible to reach her; but I measured the breadth of the water, the run of the stream, and the distance of the rapids, and had no doubt that it could be done.

I returned to the cottage, threw off my clothes, and wrapping my plaid about me, ascended the water to a distance which I judged sufficient to make the necessary allowance for its velocity, and, tossing my plaid to the old forester, plunged into the stream. When I came up I was twenty yards down the current, which was whitened with the hurricane of wind and sleet that swept over its surface. I swam with all my might, and succeeded in keeping the diagonal of the boat; but I was fast drifting, and the rain and blast drove so hard in my face, that I could scarcely see or breathe. The thunder of the rapids now became distinct through the roar of the storm. I gained, however, upon the boat, which was tugging hard upon the painter, the tension of which drew down her bows so deep into the water, that every instant I expected to see her leap from the parting rope and drift away to the rapids. I succeeded, however, in approaching before the current took me past, and, by a few desperate strokes, gained the stern, and swung round under its lee, scarce able to retain my hold. After resting for some time, I endeavoured to get in, but, owing to the depression of the head, the stern was so high, that it was like clambering over a horse's croup to get into the saddle, and, at the same time, the least dip on the side brought the water over the bows. After having played at leap-frog with the little black cockleshell for some time, I at last succeeded in surmounting her cock-tailed stern, and made haste to untie the painter. This, however, was impossible from the tension of the rope, and the swelling of the knot; and having nothing but my teeth which would cut, it seemed very problematical how I was to get her loose. Meanwhile she was half full of rain-water, and not to lose time while I was thinking what could be done, I



began to bale it out, when, perceiving that the old tin baler, which had lost its rim, had a lip as sharp as a saw, I started up to make trial of its tooth upon the rope. Crack! went the first ply—that was enough. I finished the baling, and then, having placed the oars ready on the pins, returned to the painter—snap went each ply in succession, and up we flew with a spring which almost canted me over the stern—away shot the boat, and whirling round before the blast, swept off towards the rapids. I jumped to the seat, seized the oars, and pulled for life—louder and louder grew the thunder of the falls—they were now full in view, laughing, roaring, and leaping like white horses, as they seemed to suck me in. I heard the voice of old Alasdair MacDhomhnuill coming down the wind, chanting an old iorram of the isles, which had often put might into the hundred arms of the “Biorlin Clann Raonuill”, as they pulled her through the foaming seas. I pulled as if I had been going into Coirebhreacan, till I came through the main run of the stream, and got under the lee of the hill, and at last the boat shot through into the back water, and glided round, smooth and safe, and quiet, up to the green bank. Old Alasdair was ready with my plaid, and Glen-Garrie with the cuach and the black bottle, and while I was dressing, the boat was drawn up the water, and by successive ferries brought over the whole party. We took the path to the wood, the guns were all posted, the long line of beaters filed away to make their circuit, and in about half an hour the shrill whistle of Uisdean Mor gave notice that the beat had commenced. I was posted behind a large grey stone covered with heath and whortle-berries; it was the best pass around the wood, and if deer broke before it, by their usual course they ought to cross within fifty yards of its front. As I watched the line, there was a clamour of shouts and cries from the drivers, and out broke two stags from a lower ballach, and took straight for the pass below me. They went forward like a patrol of hussars, carrying their branchy

heads with a high and gallant pace—they stopped within a hundred paces of Glen-Garrie's pass—looked back—advanced—and halted abreast, the one a little higher than the other. In the next moment a white pluff of smoke blew up in the wind out of the heather—the nearest stag dropped like a stone, and the other, making a wide leap, rushed forward about a hundred yards, and went down headlong into a little green glac, where he disappeared among the deep myrtles. All was again still, and nothing visible upon the brown heather but the appearance of a round stone opposite the place where the first deer lay, but which, in reality, was the little dun stalking-bonnet of Glen-Garrie, watching without motion towards the wood. I returned my glass in the same direction. The flankers had now passed its centre, but not even a roe came out, and the wood began to grow thinner, and the ground smoother, with only one or two ferny hollows intersecting the scattered cover. Suddenly something moved out of the tall green brackens and passed among the bushes—stopped—turned up the hill—disappeared amidst the trees—again showed a dark shadow at the skirt of the wood—and the "damh mor" came out through a little open glade which descended from the thicket. Undismayed by the sounds behind him, he advanced with a slow and stately pace, carrying his mighty head like a black tree in the air, and occasionally turning its broad beams with a majestic gaze, as if he measured the hill and the retreat which he should take. My heart might be heard to beat behind the stone, but at last he seemed to decide, and took the path which descended within eighty yards of its front. Without quickening his pace for the sound of the beaters, he advanced over the knolls and hollows, till he approached within four hundred yards, when he slackened—stopped—plucked the grass—went on a few steps—stopped, and looked at the hill—and went off at a right angle for the height! I followed his giant-shadow with a look of despair; as he ascended he made

no check nor change till he reached the sky-line of the hill, then, stopping on the summit, turned his mighty branches against the light, gave one look to the wood, felt the wind before him, and disappeared into the glen of the Garrie.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### RAIN ON THE HILLS

Having rested for a short time, and satisfied my curiosity respecting the source of the River Findhorn, we struck off over some very dreary slopes of high ground on the north-east, interspersed with green stripes, through which small burns make their way to swell the main stream of the river. Not a deer did we see, but great quantities of grouse, which, when flushed, flew to short distances, and alighting on some hillock, crowed as it were in defiance. A cold chill that passed over me made me turn and look down the course of the stream, and the first thing that I saw was a dense shower or cloud of rain working its way up the valley, and gradually spreading over the face of the country, shutting out hill after hill from our view as it crept towards us. In the other direction all was blue and bright. "We must turn home, or we shall never get across the streams and burns," was my ejaculation to the shepherd. "Deed, aye, sir," was his answer; and, tightening our plaids, we turned our faces towards the east. As the rain approached, the ring-ouzel sang more loudly, as if to take leave of the sunshine; and the grouse flew to the bare and dry heights, where they crowed incessantly.

The rain gradually came on, accompanied by a cold cutting wind. I never saw such rain in my life; it was a perfect deluge; and in five minutes I was as wet as if I had been swimming through the river. We saw the burns we had to cross on our

way home tumbling in foaming torrents down the hillsides. In the morning we had stepped across them without wetting our feet. The first one that we came to I looked at with wonder. Instead of a mere thread of crystal water, creeping rather than flowing through the stones which filled its bed, we had to wade through a roaring torrent, which was carrying in its course pieces of turf, heather, and even large stones. We crossed with some difficulty, holding by each other's collar. Two or three burns we passed in this manner, the rain still continuing, and if possible increasing. I looked round at my companion, and was only prevented from laughing at his limp and rueful countenance by thinking that he probably had just as much cause for merriment in my appearance. The poor hound was perfectly miserable, as she followed me with the rain running in streams down her long ears.

*Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands.* CHARLES ST. JOHN

### AN OBJECT FOR PITY

And it was thinking of my early start that made me open at random one of my old moroccoed copies of *Baily's Magazine* to try if I could find anything about the shooting hours of our ancestors. And the sole reference to early starts that I came upon was a sixty years' old report of a deer drive in Scotland. Now this short, bald, but very convincing statement seemed to me so full of pathos, so utterly groaning with tragedy, that I must forthwith heap for you, upon the Ossa of Mr. Baily, my own pocket Pelion.

It was, therefore, upon 5th October, 1869, that a deer drive was given in a famous highland forest to honour King Edward, then Prince of Wales. Twenty-nine rifles were out and posted in various ballachs, passes and places of advantage by 8 A.M. The morning seemed perfection, though some of the weather-

wise turned their eyes to the tops of the higher hills, where certain wisps of vapour were, here and there, in evidence. But let us borrow Mr. Baily's glass a moment and have a spy into the wild corries, darkly golden in an early sun. Saw you ever so many deer? For hither have herd and great herd been carefully manoeuvred in preparation for the royal visit. There are, indeed, as Mr. Baily points out to us, some "stately harts" among them, and this great concourse of deer feeds or fights or lies cud-chewing all unaware that twenty-nine of the nobility and gentry, each armed with four or five rifles apiece (for this is still the day of the muzzle-loader), await their pleasure.

Imagine, if you please, the staff work that has led up to this tingling moment—the moment that must presently test the toil of days. Imagine the anxiety of host and head forester! But now all will go well. The deer are unalarmed, the rifles are posted, and the far-stretching semicircle of drivers, under the orders of the Master of Lovat and Malcolm of Poltalloch, commences the final movement. Look, already one lot of deer show a slight uneasiness, and now, see, three hundred and more are jerkily trotting and pausing, and trotting again, towards the very pass where England's Heir has been in position since before sunrise. I, who have been a host myself (oh, please don't be absurd! I am not in the habit of entertaining royalty) can hardly bear to write of what follows. For, with the inexorable circumstances of fate, or a fire-proof curtain, the mists come down, clammy and impenetrable as so much cold porridge. The beaters, no longer able to keep in touch with each other, halt in their tracks, and for three long hours proceedings are suspended; the Prince shivers, and all impotently the host fumes (I'll wager it), fidgets and blows upon his fingers. Then, suddenly as they had fallen, the curtains are lifted. A few filmy threads of lace remain, maybe, tattered about the tops, but corrie and mountain bask once more in the steady October sun. And, by all the beauties of Diana, the deer (like

Scotland) stand where they did, only more of them, incredibly more, for others have joined the first lots and it would surely seem that presently H.R.H. is to have the pick of all the heads in the forest.

The Hope of the Frasers waves on, with discretion, his dhuine-wassals, and now the great herds are moving in earnest and all will surely be well. I can picture an eager forester who, at long last, hands, bareheaded, one of the cocked rifles respectfully to the royal guest. I can picture an agitated host who, half a mile away, sobs with relief at the sight his wobbling lenses reveal to him. I can hear (and so can you) his heartfelt "Thank the Lord", and then—disaster, sudden, irretrievable and black.

Just as the deer are about to commit themselves definitely, a guest, young, impetuous, and demented by the sight of such and so many potential trophies.—But Mr. Baily shall fully expound:

"A gentleman to the Prince's right, who had evidently misunderstood the directions given him and who probably had not had a great deal of experience in deer drives, opened fire on the herd at a distance of 400 yds. and got off a great many shots but without hitting a stag. The rapid fire just above them, as a matter of course, turned the herd; they rushed at full speed down the steep side of the mountain, broke through the beaters and scattered in small lots through the corries.

"This occurrence was much to be regretted, and as there was no more hope of forcing the deer forward to the passes the sportsmen left their stations."

Now, whom are you most sorry for? H.R.H.? His Host? Who? Personally I resemble Madam Placid (whose kindest word, Mr. Dobson says, was "for the erring") and my heart bleeds for "the gentleman to the Prince's right".

*At the Sign of the Dog and Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

*HIND-SHOOTING IN THE SNOW*

On breakfasting at the hotel, the morning being clear and enjoyable, we started up the beautiful glen by the side of the river which finds its rise in Loch-na-nein, on the summit or watershed. Before gaining the outlet from the loch, we had to force our way through several hundred yards of drifted snow, which filled the top of the valley from bank to bank. This was no easy task, laden as we were with rifles, ulsters, and the necessary change of clothing. The ascent was wellnigh perpendicular for a time. As long as the crust of snow carried our weight we were able to get along moderately well, but as it ever and again gave way we frequently found ourselves up to the arm-pits, and on more than one occasion were wellnigh out of sight. Wearied and utterly exhausted, we reached Loch-na-nein, which but for the overflow amongst the rugged ice we could not have recognised, it being entirely frozen over and covered with a thick coating of snow. Having many years before, while grouse shooting in the North, heard that there was a most comfortable bothy on the shore of the loch, we hopefully anticipated finding a temporary resting-place—all the more to be desired because of an impenetrable fog having settled down upon the whole scene. To our dismay and irrepressible disgust we in our search came upon the small sheiling, with its door and window destroyed, the roof fallen in, and the interior full of drifted snow. In our extremity we proceeded in quest of the Glenmore Burn, which, from the map, we believed might lead us to the discovery of Fealar Lodge. Ordinary prudence would have led us to retrace our steps, and, by following our footprints, enabled us to find our way back to the Spittal of Glenshee. With that indomitable and—the reader may be disposed to think—foolhardy persistency characteristic of sportsmen, we preferred to push forward.

Turning to the left, we got into a flat of broken marshy ground, and naturally concluded that Glenmore Burn must here find its rise. For hours we continued, as we thought, to push forward amid ever-increasing difficulties, until the snow and mist became altogether bewildering. We must, however, have walked in a very roundabout way, as is frequently done in mist. Wellnigh exhausted, and noting unmistakable indications of darkness being about to set in, we took the rifle stocks from their cover, and as the last desperate expedient, were about to dig a hole or hut in the embankment of a great snow-wreath, in the faint hope that we might thus be able to spend the night. Feeling an intense weariness stealing over us, and knowing the danger of those who fall asleep in such circumstances never again awaking, we resolved on one final effort ere we became enshrouded in the cloud of night. We had not proceeded far until the pleasing music of Glenmore Burn fell upon our ears, towards which we approached. Following its course down the glen, we came to a place usually forded by any solitary pedestrian in that wild solitude. Here we discovered the fresh footprints of a man upon the snow, when we realised something of that inspiration which filled the mind of Mungo Park when his eye fell upon the tiny little moss in the African desert. What, then, was to be done? Darkness was rapidly setting in, and neither the time nor the circumstances would admit of indecision, or even hesitancy. To follow the footprints towards the low country we were sufficiently informed to know would be a hopeless enterprise, as there could be no habitation within a distance of many miles. The only other alternative left us was to trace the human track backward, in the hope that it might lead us to Fealar Lodge, which we knew to be the only habitation within a circuit of many miles in this wild and mountainous region. Physically exhausted and dispirited, we—not without the greatest difficulty—were able to follow the track over three miles of moorland, when hope, the last refuge of per-



plexed and baffled humanity, had wellnigh deserted us. Here in the darkness we were able to discern what appeared to be the footprints of several men, but which upon close inspection we found to be those of a cow. The substantial relief realised by this incident would require a pen more gifted than mine to describe. Pressing forward a very few yards, we discovered ourselves on the bank of another mountain rivulet. On looking across we saw a light, which, on approaching, we found to be that of the object of our search—Fealar Lodge. We now learned that the footprints were those of the forester, who had left in the morning for the low country—a distance of sixteen miles—in order to obtain his letters, all communication having been cut off for several weeks. We, however, received a hearty welcome from Mrs. Macdonald, who, at once recognising the plight that we were in, supplied us with the means of ablution and warm underclothing, and in a short time had us comfortably seated at her hospitable board.

I have enjoyed many meals during a somewhat busy life in agricultural pursuits and field-sports, but on no occasion did I ever relish a repast as I did that one, of venison soup and its accompaniments.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### IN THE MIST

To get lost in a fog in a deer forest is no pleasant experience, as there are occasions on which life itself may be endangered. "When lost, follow a stream, and it will eventually take you to a human habitation", is advice gratuitously given. Such counsel requires qualification. If you lose your bearings on the watershed between two rivers running in opposite directions, and get into the wrong basin, you may eventually find yourself a very long way indeed from home by adopting this

advice. And what of burns that tumble headlong over precipices down which no man can go and live?

Well do I remember the first time I got lost in a mist in the forest. It was my first season on the hill as a gillie, and I was a mere boy at the time. The party I was with reached the top of a big corrie, and there waited for a time. The mist hung half-way down the hillsides, and as it showed no sign of rising, I and another man were ordered to make a detour and come down a tributary corrie in hopes that we might move deer below the mist line. Our route lay for nearly a mile along our boundary with another forest, which said boundary was here the watershed. To this the ground rose in gentle undulations off both sides—a dead monotony—absolutely destitute of any outstanding landmark. I had little experience, but had previously been taking mental notes of the lie of the land. My companion was elderly, but new to the work, and being rather dull-witted, was not better qualified to deal with adverse conditions than I was. As we ascended towards the boundary, some difference of opinion arose which culminated in a spirited argument. At last I noticed we were near the watershed. "Let us keep downhill a bit," I said, "for if we get right on to the top we may get into another forest and lose our way." So we held downhill. Alas! the watershed had already been crossed, and we were doing exactly what I thought I had taken precautions to prevent.

Never suspecting anything wrong we held our way. "We should be near such-and-such a burn now," I remarked. "Here it is," rejoined my companion, before we had gone another ten yards. In crossing the little rill something aroused my suspicions, and I followed its course for a few yards. Some of the small pools among the black rocks seemed strangely unfamiliar. "I am not sure we are on the right course," I said. "Let us go down the burn a bit and we will easily be able to tell if this is the stream it ought to be." If we were right this burn should soon pursue its course between high and rocky banks, but no

sign of banks appeared. At last I noticed the marks of a pony's feet coming up the stream. No pony could ever come up the stream I was looking for. We were hopelessly lost. We had no idea where we were, nor to this day do I know.

However, it behoved us to get our bearings again, so we at once started to retrace our steps in hopes of reaching some place we could recognise. After walking some time we again came on a small stream. Its appearance seemed rather familiar, and we proceeded downwards along its side. Soon we discovered it was the very stream we had just left. There could be no doubt about it for our footprints were easily distinguishable in the soft peat. Starting again, we covered about the same distance, and again reached a stream. It was the same burn we had already twice visited. Were we never to get away from this accursed water? What was the attraction that, magnet-like, always brought us back to it? We held a consultation, but could think of no other course than to resume the attempt in which we had already twice failed. This time we walked farther without encountering water. Suddenly my companion exclaimed, "We are back to where we started from." I refused to believe him. "Come this way," he said, "and I will convince you." I followed him a few yards when he pointed to a place where the grass was all trampled flat. In the wait before we started our feet had got cold, and we had been beating them on the ground for warmth. That this was the place where that had been done could not be disputed.

Again we started, and this time took very good care not to surmount the ridge. Reaching the head of the corrie, we proceeded downwards, and when clear of the mist discovered the stalking party standing over a dead stag. On joining them neither of us ever referred to our experience. Of course, we were credited with having moved the herd out of which the stag was got, but I am certain any such credit was entirely undeserved. We were much longer in appearing than we should

have been, but for this we got praise instead of censure, as it was taken for granted that we had seen the deer and stopped in order to allow them time to settle, and thus afford a better chance at a shot. It is wonderful how one sometimes gets undeserved credit.

*Days on the Hill. "AN OLD STALKER"*

### HOW TO GET LOST

It was almost dark, and we started on our homeward journey along the narrow foot-track through the forest. Sandy asked me to walk first so that I could go at my own pace. He followed me, and behind him came the gillie, there being only room to walk in single file.

I said, "It's getting awfully dark, and I can hardly see the path." No answer. I turned round: neither of the men was to be seen. I stopped and shouted loudly, "Sandy!" Still no answer. This I repeated several times with the same result. I then began to think what I had better do. It was almost dark by this time. I was in the heart of one of the largest forests in the North of Scotland, miles from any human habitation, without a scrap of food, with an empty flask, and soaked to the skin up to my waist through wading and standing in the burn, which was in flood.

I decided to retrace my steps to the old ruins of the watcher's cottage from which we had started. Taking great care not to lose the path, I began to do this, shouting now and then but hearing no reply. I tried to think out why the men should not have been following me on this path on which I was now returning, and which ran beside a broad burn which was in spate. I then remembered that the path which I had been following across the forest before I came to the burn was almost at right angles both to the burn and the path I was now on, and it occurred to me that possibly the path which I ought to have

taken lay straight across the burn, and that the men might have crossed the burn and gone in that direction. I had, I knew, been walking, as I always do on these occasions, very fast, and this made me think it not unlikely, especially as it was so dark, that the men had assumed that I had crossed the burn in front of them. Being careful not to lose the narrow track I was on in the darkness, I discovered the point at which I had turned up the burn-side, and found that the other path leading up to the burn was a little wider, which encouraged me to hope that my supposed explanation might prove to be the true one. I then waded across the burn and found there was a path at right angles to it on the other side which looked more used than the track which I had just left. I therefore made up my mind to follow this path for a time, shouting every now and then in the hope that the men might hear me, and if I did not hear any reply I would then consider whether I would go on or retrace my steps to the old ruins and there spend the night—a cheerful prospect indeed.

After going some distance along the path I suddenly heard what I thought was the sound of shouting a long way off. I stopped and shouted more loudly than ever, and then heard the shouts coming nearer, and very soon after Sandy and the gillie appeared. It turned out that what I had supposed had happened, and that they had crossed the burn thinking that I was still in front of them.

I have never since then, on my return from stalking, walked in front of the stalker along a path which I do not know.

*Amid the High Hills.* SIR HUGH FRASER

### THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE

The great hill was attacked, and much the same manoeuvres gone through as before, diversified in this case, however, by the passage of a marsh, through which, as the deer was in

sight, they had to crawl and wriggle like eels, while the water ran into their waistcoats, and trickled pleasantly down their shirts. In long single file they go, as Red Indians do in pictures when they are going to attack sleeping emigrants by night—only with more clothes on. The stag was alone, and they got safely above him, and within a hundred yards. G. got his favourite position this time—a sitting one, with legs well downhill, and elbows resting on his thighs. Big and long-bodied, with stately head and strong wide-spreading horns, by far the best stag seen that day, the switch-horn fed unconsciously below. He *was* a beauty—and the bullets went with a soft plug into the damp sod—one underneath him, the other a little to his right.

It would not be fitting to write down here the exclamations which burst simultaneously from three pairs of lips, and—when the smoke blew away—from four. The stalkers talked rapidly in Gaelic; one followed the fast diminishing stag with his glass; another, with agony depicted on every line of his face, sat down and looked up helplessly at this latter; the third picked up the discharged rifle, and, squinting down the barrels, seemed to be endeavouring to discover something about them which would account for such an extraordinary exhibition. G. was now very agitated: his blistered toe began to hurt very much; he felt, too, very sick; his cramp was coming back; and he heartily wished himself at home, in bed, anywhere but where he was. He lit a pipe; but the “York River” tasted nasty, and the pipe was stuffed up and would not draw properly. He poked up a rush, but it broke off inside the stem, and stopped the whole performance. Seeking consolation he then referred to a certain day, the week before, when he had killed two fine stags—the time he met the pretty witch. One man, who was not present, plainly disbelieved the story; the others, who were, hinted—equally plainly—that it was a fluke.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

*THE FOXHUNTER*

Our hero in this case is a young gentleman to whom shooting is ever a damned dull thing that one does in August and September or when there's a frost.

To-day there is no frost; it is, in fact, a blazing blue day in early September, and our friend, myself and brother and two or three keepers are walking wild grouse upon the scant red heather of a Scotch moor, whither, very occasionally, come the odds and ends of a neighbouring deer forest. To-day is, however, of the occasional, for, from an eminence, we see afar off three stags, who enter a long thin straggle of pine and birch-wood which runs for three miles of rough going up the glen and is about a quarter of a mile to half a mile in breadth. The wood holds, as a rule, nothing but a wheen blackgame, multitudinous black flies, and some most poisonous gnats who, nebulous, follow the tortured gun. The walking is vile. But the sight of deer has inflamed the whole party, nay, even our hero shows something almost akin to interest. A messenger, speedy as Malise of the Cross of Pine, races home for rifle and ammunition while the committee of ways and means decides that it would be advisable, the wind being in the air that it is in, if he who would take the shot stationed himself at the hither end of the wood. The rest of the party, it was decided, should make a detour of some hot miles, enter the timber at the top of the Glen and walk it west again, shooting, browslapping, and hunting the spaniels. It would be certain, say the experts, that the three great beasts (great they seemed to us then, though the saner reflection of to-day recalls but rubbish) would keep to the wood and break only at the end where the rifle would have a "gr-a-nd chance". And the committee passes a vote of censure upon itself in that it had omitted to command the presence of ponies duly to carry down the slain. But now

the weapon is here and the spin of a coin decides (ours is an unlucky family) that our companion shall have the shot. We post him among a convenient outcrop of granite and take the long, long trail. "Fair and young were they when in hope they began that long journey."

No roar of black powder has aroused the sleepy echoes of afternoon when, hours later, the beaters again approach the cairn whereon, in a bed of heather cut for his private repose and refreshment, stretches the young Endymion. He dreams of Diana, indeed, and in his sleep he smiles a happy smile, for does he not see the Cottesmore bitches stream away from Ranksborough, and who but the slumberer's self should be that galloping young gentleman with the flying coat-tails, the flying start? Yes, happily, he smiles and sits up to rub a blue eye only when, with staccato yelps and harsh, inarticulate cries of animal rage, the driving party point out to each other, in the soft black earth about the cairn, certain neat impressions, clean-cut impressions known as slots, impressions made, and freshly made, by the dainty feet of deer.

*At the Sign of the Dog and Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

### STINK-POTS

Up to this point the stalk had been perfectly successful; the stag had made out nothing of us, and had he remained in his former position I should have had a good chance at him. There was, however, nothing further which could be done on that tack, so I determined on another. While he lay in a hole below the top of the hillock, I made a detour out of his sight, round the hill where he lay, and, keeping as near the wind as I dared, I got behind it, and then, crawling over the top till I could just see the crockets of his horns, I sat down within thirty yards of him with the rifle on my knees, and John



behind me, determined to sit over him till he got up out of his hole to feed, which it was a thousand to one he would do before very long, and then he was venison to a dead certainty.

I was determined I would not lose so good a beast for want of patience, and decided I would give him every possible chance, after having reached him with such infinite difficulty. Alas! in this case, virtue went unrewarded; but I did the right thing, and should do it again. My excellent arrangements and long patience were rendered vain and upset at the last moment by one of those accidents over which a stalker has no control. This is what happened: I sat over that blessed stag without a move for four mortal hours, hoping he would get up every minute. It sleeted, it hailed, it rained, and it blew. I, seated shivering on the top, had the full benefit of it, while this horned brute chewed the cud in comfort, snug and warm in his hole below.

I had been seated on the top for about two hours when the rabbits, which had their holes all over this hill, came out to feed, popping all around him. He could not see me unless he came out of his hole, and stood up, but these "stink-pots" (as Lord Seafield used to call the rabbits), which were feeding beyond him on the open turf, commanded both me and John, and I could see the brutes cock up the sides of their round heads and bead-like eyes and look at me very suspiciously every few minutes. At first the stag seemed to take no notice of them and their suspicions; but at last he did, and evidently thought there was danger in the wind somewhere—for every time they cocked their heads on one side and squinted at me, round with a whirl came his horns as he tried to look above him, and discover what the dickens the rabbits were winking at behind. Off comes my rifle bolt whenever these gymnastics take place, for each time I thought, "Now he is going to rise, now for my chance!" But if he thought he was going to make me show myself first, he was mistaken, as I intended him to move into

my sight. I stirred not, neither would he. Already another two hours had passed, and I was beginning to think of whistling him up, for it was getting both late and very stormy, when, without a hint or a sign of any kind, he made one bound out of his hole, and was over the sky-line and out of sight below before I could fire at him! I was cross, and I had reason to be; but, as John sententiously observed, "It couldna be helped, whatayver".

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

## TWO HOURS

Now two hours slip away in no time by the fireside with a pretty girl to chat with, or a nice book to read; or equally at the dinner table, or in the smoking-room, they vanish imperceptibly; but two hours spent cramped up in a horrid black peat bog, afraid to move, speak, or smoke, and with nothing to do but keep a continual watch on a pair of horns standing out of the heather is quite another way of passing time.

*Highland Sport.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

## 'TWIXT CUP AND LIP

On an occasion when one of my best gillies was about to be promoted to the charge of a beat, the owner asked me to give "Donald" an opportunity of stalking in non-important cases. On a certain day we came on a parcel of stags in a favourable position for Donald, so I handed him the rifle, telling him to bring the Colonel within shot of the best beast, a nice ten-pointer. Off they set, and I remained behind, with my telescope watching the progress of the stalk, which occupied about two hours. When at last I noticed the rifle being raised, I turned the glass on to the ten-pointer; I saw the stag drop to a graze

on the top of the shoulder before I heard the report of the rifle. The stag lay on his broad back as the Colonel and the stalker approached him; when the latter seized the foreleg and was about to apply the knife, the Colonel produced his flask and asked him to drink to the blood of the next stag. The temptation was too great; Donald held the knife in his left hand, releasing the stag's foreleg, so as to take the cup that was being passed to him. When Donald was in the act of drinking to the death of the next stag, the one apparently dead sprang to his legs, bolted uphill, and disappeared before the rifle could be found—and was never seen again.

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHIE

### GOING HOME

The pleasure of the day is past and its excitement, and you have to go on for hours downward, till your knees ache with the burden so continuously put upon them.

So it is here: you set your foot on what you think is a stone, and it turns out to be a hole. You are willing to step into a pool of water which seems a foot below you, but it is three feet below you, as you know when you have sufficiently recovered from the unexpected shock to climb out of it. You rejoice on getting on to a nice smooth slope, but it is a slope uphill, and seems to tilt and jar you all over. You tumble into a great peat-hag, landing on the bank opposite on your chest, and bite your tongue, and drive all the wind out of your body, and wish you were dead—yes—if you had shot fifty stags. And if you have shot *none*—if you have only a sorrowful tale of misses to relate when you get in—what a fate is yours!

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

*AN EMPTY SADDLE*

Down the hill path echo the hoof-beats hollow,  
The empty saddle sways;  
Sadly the road that weary feet must follow  
Winds through the darkling braes.

Soft fall the clansman voices, hushed, complete in  
A pathos worse than woe;  
Meet tongue indeed to murmur of defeat in—  
The Gaelic, gentle, low!

Up in the cliffs the raven cries for slaughter,  
That caustic croaking mocks  
A beaten man whose heart is in the water  
That squelches in his socks.

Bird of ill omen, sombre and accurst one,  
Be still upon your crag,  
You surely don't suppose that I'm the first one  
Who missed a rotten stag?

*Green Days and Blue Days.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS



# RIFLE AND EQUIPMENT

*When half of your bullets fly wide in the ditch  
Don't call your Martini a cross-eyed old bitch—  
She's as human as you are, you treat her as sich.*

RUDYARD KIPLING

*All the growing heap of garments buds and blossoms like a rose.*

J. ELROY FLECKER



## RIFLE AND EQUIPMENT

### *TELESCOPE*

DRAW the telescope out to its full length, then sit down and focus it on some object at average "spying" distance, say 800 to 1000 yards. When you have found your right focus, make a scratch with a pin round the eyepiece draw-tube where it enters the first ring. This will leave a silvery line, and saves time in future "spying", as when you draw your telescope you can at once adjust the eyepiece draw-tube to your focus, and so avoid fumbling with it after the telescope is to your eye.

In looking through a telescope it is well to use neither eye too long at a time, especially if holding the other one shut. With a little practice you can learn to keep both eyes open and use the telescope with alternate eyes. Also I do not like (if it can possibly be avoided) to use a telescope immediately before shooting, as it tires the eyes. There are several ways of holding a telescope steadily. (By the way, it is curious that not one artist in a hundred draws a man holding a telescope to his eye properly. They represent it held with both hands away from the face with the eyepiece to the eye in a way that would make the user of the glass poke his own eye out.) The proper way is to put the first and second fingers of the nearer hand round the eyepiece, and put the thumb along the cheek, the little finger against the mouth, and the tips of the other fingers touching



the nose. In this way you shut out external light and avoid poking out your eye.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### SPYING IN A HIGH WIND

The best spying position is to lie nearly flat on the back, with a stone or tussock of grass to rest the shoulders against; then drawing up the knees, hold the glass firmly against the left knee, and you will be able to hold it perfectly steady in a high wind. Practice alone will make an adept in "picking up" deer, but *absolute immobility* of the glass is the first thing to ensure success.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### FIREWORKS

In using the spyglass, if the sun is shining at your back, and you are spying straight downhill, be careful not to take the glass from the eye and hold it so that the sun's rays pass through it; should this precaution be neglected the deer will be treated to a regular Crystal Palace display of fireworks which they will not stay long to admire.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### TELESCOPIC SIGHTS

It is the opinion of many that the use of the telescopic sight makes the shooting of deer too easy. *If the quarry will only keep still* it is apparently brought almost within touch of the muzzle of the rifle, and missing becomes nearly impossible. All the difficulties of judging distance, all the nicety of taking the sight in bad light, all the pleasure in fact of making a brilliant shot



“ IF THE QUARRY WILL ONLY KEEP STILL ”



with the ordinary rifle is done away with, and whether this is to be desired is certainly a debatable point, and resolves itself into a matter of taste.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### A DAINY LADY

Never forget that a rifle is totally different from a gun, and requires more care to keep it in a state of perfection. A good stalker will clean his gentleman's rifle before he changes his clothes or has his supper.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### A USE FOR THIS BOOK

A page of this book will serve to indicate how far along the barrel the hind-sight should be placed. For this purpose hold a page at varying distances from your eyes until you have discovered exactly how *close* you can hold a page *without causing the letters to appear blurred*. The hind-sight of the rifle should be fixed on the barrel at this distance from your eye.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### THE BACK POSITION

When approaching deer feet foremost, the back position is the easiest to shoot from. There are many forms of this, but the one I adopt, and which is suitable to anyone not stout or short-necked, is as follows: I turn on my right side, and rest the rifle on the outside of my left knee, my left leg crossing my right. The left hand either steadies the butt of the rifle or holds the fore-end against the left knee. This position also enables you to spring to your feet quickly, or to a sitting position

for your second barrel as the deer gallop off. If you shoot in the prone position, be sure to let your legs slope well to the left.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### A RUNNING BEAST

It would probably surprise a good many people to learn how few frequenters of deer forests have ever killed a stag moving even at a walk, while fewer still are those lessees who can kill a right and left when the stags are racing past at the speed of a racehorse and bounding into the air, or who have even attempted to do so. A stag racing past you, downhill, and at a distance of, say, 200 yards, needs an allowance of over a length and a half to two lengths to bring him down with an express rifle. The newest high-power small-bore rifles have reduced this allowance. But always remember that the point aimed is where the stag's shoulder *will be* at the moment when he is struck, *not* the position of that shoulder at the moment of firing. For instance, if the stag is springing off his hind-legs as you fire at the level of his shoulders, he will jump *over* your bullet. If he is landing on his fore-legs, the same aim will shoot over him. If he is on the upward part of his bound, shoot high; if landing from his spring, aim low. I like, if possible, to shoot at running deer at the moment when they are landing over a burn. By watching how the leading hinds land in jumping a burn or other obstacle in the course, you can often take each stag as he follows at the same place.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### ONE GREAT FAULT

One great fault in shooting at deer is the notion that, when you have taken careful aim, all you have to do is to pull the

trigger. But there are different ways of pulling the trigger. Try to get hold of the idea that the operation of firing is not concluded when the trigger is pulled, and that the eye should be kept fixed on the foresight until time is allowed for the crack of the bullet to reach the ear.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### THE TALKATIVE "TORTOISE"

"Carry the rifles with their muzzles to the rear, and then you will not drill me with one of my own balls, as Sandy Macintosh there was near doing the other day."

"Not so near, either, for the ball didna pass within half a fut o' ye, and I didna pull the trigger—so it wasna me that was to blame; I joost took up the gun by the neb, and as she lay on the ground ahint you, and as I pulled her alang, the heather caught the trigger, and somehow or anither, she banged aff; so I couldna help it."

"Nothing can be more evident, Sandy; but just keep the muzzle to the rear in future."

"Why, the same thing chanced to Glengarry, and he said naething ava anent it."

"Very likely, Sandy; but you see I am of a more talkative disposition."

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE SHOT

And now for the critical and exciting moment of taking the shot. For two hours, perhaps for three or four, or longer even, has the sportsman walked, run, crawled, crept, and waited, and done all he could to outwit his quarry, and the next few minutes will decide whether all his exertion and his trouble

has been taken in vain. Small wonder that anxiety for the result should take possession of him. If the stag is standing still and broadside on, the best plan is to put the rifle sights on the inside of his fore-leg, bring them very slowly up the leg till it joins the body, and then when you "see brown" press, or rather squeeze the trigger gently. This was the receipt of the late Colonel Campbell of Monzie, than whom there was no one in all Scotland more able to give good advice on such a matter. The probabilities are that in every shot the bullet will strike a little higher than the exact spot aimed at; whether a few inches to the right or left matters not, it will be equally fatal. Do not fire at deer standing end on or facing you; even if they appear alarmed, wait quietly, and they will usually give a fair chance. In shooting downhill sit up and plant the heels firmly in the ground, resting both the elbows on the thighs; in shooting uphill seek for a tussock or a big stone round which to push the rifle, and lie flat behind it, but do not on any account fire off the shoulder as if shooting at a cock grouse. Expecially do not sit up and fire off the shoulder if it is an uphill shot; for you will be so inclined to fall backwards that it becomes impossible to hold the rifle steady. Crawl in and get a rest: do this if even there are a hundred eyes apparently all looking at you; your cap is all they can see, and if that is of a good colour, and moves slowly, deer will stay staring at it and trying to make out what it is, and before they have done that a shot can generally be taken. In firing at moving deer practice alone will teach how far to hold in front.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### HOW TO CARRY CARTRIDGES

Cartridges should be carried in some way which prevents their rattling against each other, but does not hinder their easy

extraction from the case. Most cartridge cases or belts require a lot of tugging or unbuttoning before it is possible to draw out the cartridges. A useful habit is to cause your tailor to furnish the lining of your right-hand pocket with a few compartments of a size to take one cartridge each, and tight enough to hold them during a crawl without making it difficult to draw one out whatever the position in which you chance to be at the moment of needing so to do. Take enough cartridges, you *may* need them all.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### RACEHORSE AND JACKASS

In the Highlands you seldom carry the rifle for any considerable distance, so that half a pound more or less in the weight of it need not be much consideration. We have the well-known racing dictum that weight will bring a racehorse and a jackass together, the former being in this case represented by your stalker; there is, therefore, no reason for using a very light weapon, and the full weight makes a fairer handicap.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### THE USES OF "UNCLE"

The best way, at the end of a season, is to send your rifle to the maker, or follow the plan of an eccentric gentleman who, though in possession of a large income, sends his whole battery to "his uncle's", borrowing a merely nominal amount on their value; his reason for so doing being that the law of the land compels that relation to take all and every care of anything entrusted to him!

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE



### CAMOUFLAGE

The "gentleman" clothed in a suit of Lovat mixture, and conscious that its colour perfectly harmonises with the verdure of the corrie down which he is crawling, rejoices that he (or his valet) had the forethought to make that particular selection when he dressed in the morning. But presently he finds himself among the grey stones at the bottom. Here crawling is not so pleasant. Instead of the recumbent position and easy slide down a soft velvety and comparatively dry turf, he finds himself on his hands and knees, crawling on sharp stones. Now he regrets the Lovat mixture, and would fain have worn that other suit of grey and white check. However, the zone of rock is not very wide, and he presently reaches the black peat beyond. But he may still require to crawl in order to escape observation from some other beast that is now in view. Here he wishes for a further change of costume to suit the dark ground on which he is lying, and longs for the heather mixture which adorned his person the day before when he was shooting grouse. Not being a circus-rider possessed of three sets of clothes which can be stripped off one after the other, he has to be satisfied with the garments in which he originally started, and in all probability these are good enough for the purpose. The fact is that for stalking any neutral coloured or check tweed will suffice; but for those who are very particular as to the invisibility of their dress I would suggest wearing jacket and waistcoat of one pattern, and knickerbockers of another.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### FOR THE LEGS

For the legs I prefer knickerbocker-breeches, as giving more freedom to the legs when climbing, but they should not button

very tight below the knee (knickerbockers, if worn, need not buckle below the knee at all), or, if you do not catch cold easily and there are not many thorns about, breeches cut off just above the knee, as worn by Swiss peasants, leaving the knee bare, are still better for climbing, and I think less apt to give rheumatism, as the knee dries as soon as it gets wet, instead of having a clammy bit of cloth against it all day.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### A WOOLLEN JERSEY

I have long ago discarded taking a coat or a cape out. No matter how it rains, one cannot be encumbered with anything extra, and I now find by far the best thing to take is a woollen jersey, which slips into the man's pocket and is quite as efficacious as a coat in the event of sitting about on the tops. If it rains you must be wet, if it freezes you must shiver and shake; but to toil about in a heavy coat or cape which blows over your head, or becomes so sodden with water that it weighs you to the very ground—particularly if you have missed a beast or made some other humiliating blunder—is to my mind a great mistake.

*The High Tops of Black Mount.* THE MARCHIONESS OF BREADALBANE

### LAD WI' THE PHILIBEG!

And now if my reader be a poor Sassenach, let me exhort him not to put on a kilt to stalk in; the dress can hardly be a comfortable one for pony-back, and knees that are bared but for a few weeks each year are apt to look blue and cold; granite rocks are hard and sharp to crawl over without long practice, and even burnt heather is not altogether a bed of roses; also skinned and bleeding knees are not a pretty sight to enter the

breakfast-room if ladies be of the party, and altogether picturesque as the dress may be, it is best left to those who are to the manner born. Even those whose native garb it is do not always find it pleasant, and many a time on a snowy east wind day in October the writer has seen *through the glass* one of the best known veteran stalkers of Scotland with his stockings pulled up over his thighs as high as they would come. He little knew he was being inspected!

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### ODDS AND ENDS

Strong shoes are preferable to boots.

Every pocket should have its button.

In addition to a first-rate spyglass to be carried by your gillie, you should have a pair of small field-glasses carried in a loose pocket on your left breast attached by a whipcord.

A pocket compass, a whistle, small metal flask (filled before you start, but not necessarily emptied before you return), and a strong single-bladed knife are necessities.

A woollen necktie and a dry pair of warm mits should be always forthcoming from your heavy coat at the end of the day if you have to drive or ride home.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### THE ARTIST

I remember a man some years ago (an artist too, who ought to have understood colour "values") who came deer-stalking where I was. He had shot small game all his life, but never deer. He had a dark-green velvet jacket with brass buttons, a big piece of leather over each shoulder *pipeclayed white*, and white fox-hunting breeches.

When the forester who had charge of him had got him out of sight of the house he said:

"We may as well stop at home as try to get you within shot of deer with all that white about you. I will either have to rub you with peat till you get a good colour, or take you home."

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

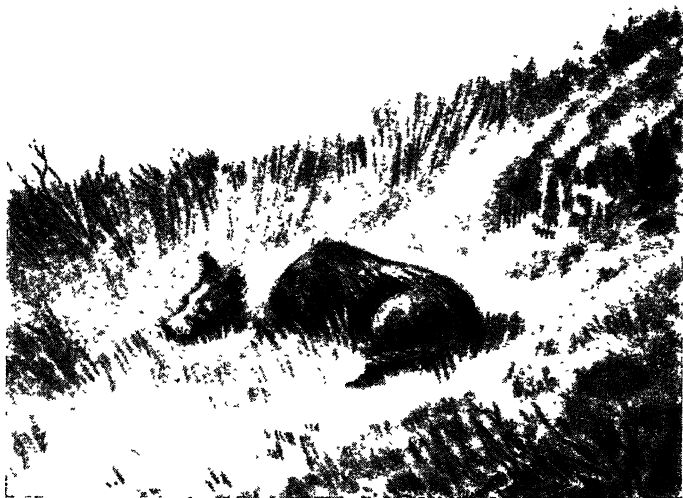
### AN ABSOLUTE ULYSSES

Hyacinthine curls are a very graceful ornament to the head, and accordingly they have been poetically treated of; but we value not grace in our shooting-jacket. I leave it to a deer-stalker's own good sense to consider whether it would not be infinitely better for him to shave the crown of his head at once, than to run the risk of losing a single shot during the entire season. A man so shorn, with the addition of a little bog earth rubbed scientifically over the crown of his head, would be an absolute Ulysses on the moor, and (*coeteris paribus*) perfectly invisible. Do this or not, as you please, gentlemen; I am far from insisting upon it with vigour, because, to my utter shame and confusion, be it spoken, I never did it myself.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE



# DEER-HOUNDS AND TRACKERS —TERRIERS TOO



*Two dogs of black St. Hubert's breed  
Unmatched for courage, breath and speed  
Fast on his flying traces came  
And all but won that desperate game.*

SIR WALTER SCOTT

*"We must louse a dog, sir!"*

WILLIAM SCROPE

*For though when Time or Fates consign  
The terrier to his latest earth,  
Vowing no wastrel of the line  
Shall dim the memory of his worth  
I meditate the silkier breeds,  
Yet still an Amurath succeeds.*

JOHN HAILSHAM



# DEER-HOUNDS AND TRACKERS —TERRIERS TOO

## *A GENTLEMAN'S DOGS*

IN the eleventh century, so greatly were deer-hounds in estimation, that by the forest laws of Canute the Great, no person under the rank of a gentleman was allowed to keep one.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

## *DEER-HOUNDS*

When the deer gains the water, he always takes to bay. It is then that the courage and experience of the dogs are shown, the young and the rash going up at once at his head, while those which understand the attack assail him from the flank. The same temerity is shown by the young, and the same caution by the veteran dogs in coming up with the deer at the run. The former often rush at once at the "front", and are generally maimed or killed, for the deer strikes to either side with surprising force and velocity. Two fine young dogs belonging to the late Glen-Garrie were thus killed in their first run by a gallant stag, which they were driving down the dry channel of a mountain stream, and as they sprung at his throat from either side, with a rapid flourish of his head he struck them right and left, and laid them dead among the stones. There are,



however, dogs which have peculiar modes of attack. Thus some will seize the deer by the fetlock, and one named Factor, a small but very fleet highly-couraged dog, belonging to the late James Duff of Innes, was accustomed to make a spring over the deer's croup, and fix himself on the nape of his neck, when he never failed to bring him down.

Formerly, it was so common for a single hound to kill a "cool" deer, that, in the old Gaelic hunting-songs and heroic poems, it is a common allusion in the attributes of the dogs; and those of the highest character would pull down two, and even three, in one beat. Thus, in the Ossianic remains:

A deer fell by *every* dog,  
Three by *Bran* alone.

It is now so rare for a single greyhound to kill one strong stag that these allusions would be considered poetical licences, had they not been corroborated by a few examples among modern dogs. The late Glen-Garrie had several which were equal to an ordinary deer, and one which pulled down three with scarce any interval between the runs. He had been slipped at a young stag, which, favoured by soft ground, he had killed after a very short run; and almost as soon as he fell, a hind, which had been lying in a hollow near the place, was raised by one of the beaters, and bolting across the brae in sight of the dog, he instantly gave chase and pulled her down also. Meanwhile Glen-Garrie was upon the other side of the glen, near a small wood which had not been beaten, and signalled for the greyhound. As the leader approached the thicket, a hind broke before him, and in the struggles of the dog, under his excitement at the view of the deer, he slipped his collar, and in the next moment the hound was in full pursuit, and after a sharp run came up with and pulled down his game apparently undistressed. A similar feat in similar ground was also performed some years ago by a very noble hound, then the property of

Mr. Fraser, who at that time occupied the sheep-farm of Cruachie, upon the marches of the Monadh-Liath. In both occasions the runs were made in soft plain ground, and were voluntarily taken by the dogs, for no true deer-hunter would have slipped them intentionally.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE FIGHTING HOUNDS

One of the deer-hounds slipped his collar and seized the throat of the dead hart, which the men were lifting out from the burn, with savage ferocity; being choked off when they gained the banks, he turned his wrath towards his friend in the leash, and these two bloodthirsty villains flew furiously at each other, and were parted at some risk and difficulty. This sort of conflict was, indeed, a very common occurrence; it began with a low growl, then a grinning, and exposition of certain white teeth; then a setting up of bristles, a sudden spring, and war to the knife.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### BISMARCK AND LASSIE

Bismarck was a lemon-and-white otter hound, a regular character; his trackings are history in the wild hills of Lochiel's country. He certainly was an invaluable dog, as a tracker in the deep fir woods of Glen Mealy and Loch Arkaig; he would in a wonderful way puzzle out the blood over streams, bogs and through holes, in which a wounded stag, though close to him, could hide himself. "Why on earth do you call your dog 'Bismarck'?" said I one day to Chisholm. "Ah thin, Cornel," he replied, with a profound look of wisdom, "ye see 'tis jist

his richt name, whatayver, for isn't he as wise as ever Bismarck was?" Poor Dog, *Anno Domini* took him at last, and he was succeeded by a clever little black and white collie bitch called Lassie. It was the prettiest thing in the world to see Chisholm stalking up to a beast, and the little bitch close beside him, following all his motions; when he crawled she crawled; when he went flat, she crouched close to the ground; when he walked upright, so did she; if told to lie down by a sign, there she would stop till she was called. She wanted no string when on the track, or at any other time; she was perfectly trustworthy, and as quiet as a little mouse; such an animal when stalking is invaluable.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### LASSIE

I have come to the conclusion that nothing beats a collie for general use on the hill. He is possessed of instinct, one may almost call it sense, in a higher degree than any other breed, and he is more tractable—he will run by sight or by scent, loose or on a cord—he will keep close to his master, requiring no gillie to lead him—he can be taught to lie down, and will even learn to crawl when necessary, at any rate his motions are those of an animal who knows that he is trying to approach his prey unobserved. But the chief merit in a collie over all other dogs for following a wounded deer consists in his wonderful faculty for distinguishing between the track of a wounded and that of a cold stag.

I cannot refrain from giving one instance of the sagacity of a small bitch called Lassie, whose progeny I am glad to say are still flourishing in the glen, though none of them have as yet equalled the fame of their ancestress.

I was out at the far-off end of the forest, and, getting a shot

at a stag almost in the gloaming, wounded it in the forearm. The deer had not seen me, and as only one shot had been fired and it was nearly dusk, they were not much alarmed. They ran straight down the hill about 150 yards, crossed the burn, ran about the same distance up the other side, and then stopped, turned round and then stared back at us. The distance across was quite short, the banks of the burn being steep, and we were just able to distinguish the wounded deer, having observed him limping behind the others before they came to a standstill. What were we to do? It was impossible to move—the deer would have picked us up at once and been off. There was no time to follow them, and there was a dense fir wood with high heather only half a mile away. "Shall I slip Lassie?" said the stalker. "Surely not at a herd of deer!" I exclaimed; "she will probably go after a calf or something and disturb the whole forest." "Well, as you think right," he replied, "but I have great confidence in the bitch, and besides she will soon overtake the herd, and the lame one is likely to be the last, and therefore the first which Lassie will come up to." This last argument decided me. "Let her go," I whispered, and off she went. So quick were her movements, that the herd had not started when she was close upon them. Then they broke up into two lots, and off they went at a great pace. Would Lassie take the lot in which was our wounded stag? No! she goes after the others, and our hearts sink within us. But only for an instant—quick as thought she finds out that our stag is not in front of her, so she gallops back to where they were standing, takes up the track of the other parcel, and away she goes again in hot pursuit. She gets close to them—a real fast dog will always beat a deer uphill—they again split up, the wounded stag and one other going to the right, the remainder straight on up the hill. "We are done this time," I exclaimed, as the bitch went as hard as she could after the herd. The words were hardly out of my mouth when she again turned back, took up

the track of our wounded beast, came up with him, turned him down to the burn, and in less than a minute afterwards we had him with a shot through his head. This was a splendid performance.

*Fur and Feather Series. CAMERON OF LOCHIEL*

### KENNEDY'S LITTLE TRACKER

So we clambered down the cliff to where the stag had been lying when I fired at him.

The first thing I saw was blood close by. Pointing to it, I remarked, "Well, Kennedy, what do you call this? did I miss him, think you?" for I knew he must be mortally wounded from the fact of my only having his back to shoot at. But Kennedy was now perfectly satisfied at the sight of blood, and so far relented as to say "he was just thinkin' it was a vara gude shot." Then taking his funny little terrier out of his pocket, he put her on the track. The little beast, hardly bigger than a rabbit, took the blood at once, and popped along just in front of us; and it was as much as she could manage to get through the high grass. When we came to the spot where the stag had rolled over, we found a pool of blood, and, following on, saw he had fallen several times; but we could see nothing of him anywhere.

The little tracker, after waiting some time for us, got very impatient, and trotted off on her own account, disappearing from our sight. The hillside was nearly straight up and down, and very slippery. Soon after we reached a big burn which ran down till it hurled itself over a ledge of rock into the glen below—a good waterfall. Here we found a deal of blood, but from that point we lost all trace of the stag. We sent a gillie to see if he could find what had become of the terrier: when we got down to the waterfall he called out, waving his cap, "There's the poor feller dead enough!" and there he was, to

be sure. He had got as far as the falls, and then rolled over them, and there below sat the little tracker, trembling with excitement, by his side, licking his life-blood.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### ANGUS-WITH-THE-DOGS

Angus-with-the-dogs was continually passing over the country like the shadow of a cloud. He was always wandering about with his gun over his shoulder, his terriers, Spoineag and Fruich, at his heels, and the kitchen of every tacksman was open to him. He was a dead shot; he knew the hole of the fox, and the cairn in which an otter would be found. He knew the seldom-visited loch up amongst the hills which was haunted by the swan, the cliff of the Cuchullins on which eagles dwelt. He knew all the races of dogs. In the warm blind pup he saw, at a glance, the future terrier or staghound. He could cure the distemper, could crop ears and dock tails. He could cunningly plait all kinds of fishing-tackle; could carve *quaichs*, and work you curiously-patterned dagger-hilts out of the black bog-oak. If you wished a tobacco-pouch made of the skin of an otter or a seal, you had simply to apply to Angus. From his variety of accomplishments he was an immense favourite. The old farmers liked him because he was the sworn foe of polecats, foxes, and ravens; the sons of farmers valued him because he was an authority on rifles and fowling-pieces, and knew the warm shelving rocks on which bullet-headed seals slept, and the cairns on the sea-shore in which otters lived; and because if any special breed of dog was wanted he was sure to meet the demand. He was a little, thick-set fellow, of great physical strength, and of the most obliging nature; and he was called Angus-with-the-dogs, because without Spoineag and Fruich at his heels, he was never seen.

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH

*A HIGHLAND TERRIER—THE RIGHT SORT*

When the dog was about eight months old, the lad, its owner, induced his father to put a badger's skin over his head and shoulders and crawl into the room on his hands and knees to see how the dog would act. Being well bred, it rushed at its supposed natural enemy and fastened on to the nose of the old gentleman, who shrieked out murder at the pitch of his voice. Without attempting to render assistance, the young scamp cried out, "Bide it, man—faither, bide it, man; it'll be the makin' o' the pup".

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

*BRANDY*

*(A Hill Man)*

Grizzled and stiff with his eight Decembers  
The old dog hobbles across the yard,  
Eyes blood-shotten and red as embers,  
Coat worn thin and a face be-scarred:  
Poor old bandy dog, poor old Brandy dog,  
Full of battles and fights fought hard.

Time to sit in the cosy ingle:  
Time to curl on the roe-skin mat,  
Where the warrior dreams shall mingle  
Fox and otter and mountain-cat:  
Torn ears cock to them, grim jaws lock to them  
(Devil a doubt—you'd say—of that!)

"Past your best," so the critic said it,  
"Bit too old for the hill," said he;

“Liked the looks of you” (to his credit,  
Captious Sassenach though he be);  
That’s his say of it, that’s the way of it:  
Let him climb to the cairns and see!

Cairns and crags where the snow-flake flurries,  
Coigns where the great hill-foxes grin,  
Hostile caves of a hundred worries—  
Take the terriers, *huic* them in:  
Lithe and little dogs, keen and kittle dogs,  
Two twin devils to thrust and pin!

Hark, they’re up to him, hot and deadly  
(Hark, and hear it, and hold your breath!);  
Yards below, how the fight roars redly—  
Little Besom and little Beth;  
Hark the noise of ’em, hark the joys of ’em—  
Battle, murder, and sudden death!

Beat, though—out again, bristling, bleeding,  
Lost him somehow (your young ’uns can);  
Pick them up, they shall prove their breeding  
Yet with many a cateran—  
“Now, old pup, to him! in, and up to him!  
Leu in, Brandy! leu in, old man!”

Mute and murderous, in he bustles;  
Never a whimper boasts he’s found;  
Only an eerie wind that rustles,  
Moans and moils, as the flasks go round;  
Dark and chill it is, on the hill it is—  
Yes, but the old dog’s still to ground!



Up and out crawls the grim old savage,  
Red as ribbons from crest to pad;  
One hill-robber no more shall ravage—  
Had the brush of him, eh, old lad:  
Lord, no fears o' you, eight hard years o' you;  
Wouldn't have quit until you had!

Grizzled and stiff with his long Decembers,  
The old dog hirkles adown the hill,  
Eyes blood-shotten and red as embers,  
Rumbling yet of the grip and kill:  
Poor old Brandy dog, poor old bandy dog.  
Worth the pick of the young 'uns still!

*A Peck o' Maut.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

# THE PONIES



*The pony meets you down below  
Grazing at large with slackened girth,  
At sight of you his features glow  
With pity, not untouched by mirth,  
And where the quarry should have been  
You mount and quit the painful scene.*

SIR OWEN SEAMAN

*Kittle the quaere! But at least  
The day I've backed the fashious beast!*

R. L. STEVENSON



## THE PONIES

### THE PONY

IN most parts of Scotland a gillie and pony can be hired for two guineas a week, and it is worth all the money to meet the couple at the end of a hard day and home ten miles off and the rain coming down.

A friend of the writer's realised this fact so acutely, that he was once heard to exclaim *sotto voce* as he was setting off for a twelve-mile tramp from an outlying corrie, at about six o'clock on a dark October evening, in the face of wind, rain, and darkness, and over a very rough and steep ground, "Well, I would give twenty pounds to be able to go into Long's and get a pint of champagne and order a cab". So if pony and gillie are to be had, reader, take advice and secure them, or the day may come when you will feel inclined to exceed my friend's bid!

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### "BLACK DONALD"

I had a most excellent hill pony at Fannich, called "Black Donald". He was very powerful, perfectly sure-footed, and would carry me anywhere without hesitation. I have ridden this animal both up and down places which astonished even the men themselves, who were used to the ground, and had

taken deer home over a great part of it for many years. M'Lennan said to me one day, as I rode down the north face of the balloch over Aultchonier, "Well, General, you can say you have ridden down a place where no one else ever rode down before, and where, till now, we did not know the pony could go". To see this beast take a good stag up the crags, below "Château Hervie", facing the north, was indeed a marvel; he would climb up more like a goat than a horse. "Black Donald", however, had his whims, and though he had carried stags for many a year, he pretended he did not like them, and if allowed to look at them, sometimes gave trouble; but it was all sham. However, his master used to humour him, and put his jacket over his head while putting the stag on him; and then he was as quiet as a lamb, and would carry the deer over any ground.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### OLD BLAIR PONY

The ponies had been kept in readiness to take home the deer; they were a hardy race, redundant in mane and tail, and contemptners of the bridle. Amongst these was one known by the name of "Old Blair Pony", who had always the honour of bringing home the Duke's deer. It was an office he delighted in; and he was wont to evince his sense of pleasure by rubbing his muzzle in the blood, and by towzling the beast, as Squire Western has it.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE MASTER PONY

The hill ponies are mostly turned out for the night either on to the hill or into a walled enclosure; the latter is much the best, as they cannot stray, and it saves a lot of time and trouble

catching them each morning. Many lodges, however, have no enclosed place, and then to get them all in quickly the master pony should be caught first, and the rest will usually follow. It is curious how some one particular pony will assume the leadership of the others; but it always happens so, and even if half a dozen strange ponies that have never met before are turned out together, in a few hours, by some mutual understanding, one will take the lead and the rest will go wherever he shows the way.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### "THE MOUSE" AT GLENDOLE

I fortunately was supplied with a most excellent deer pony by my landlord. I never saw a better, his only fault being he was too high; but "the Mouse" was as steady as a rock, and could carry anything anywhere. It was very funny to see him turn round and examine the stag he was going to be laden with; if it was a large, heavy one, he made a wry face and sneezed at it.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK



# EAGLES



*Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.*

THE BOOK OF JOB





# EAGLES

## *THE EAGLE*

HE clasps the crag with crooked hands;  
Close to the sun in lonely lands  
Ring'd with the azure world he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;  
He watches from his mountain walls,  
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

LORD TENNYSON

## *EAGLES IN THE HIGH CUILLIN*

On clear noons of early summer the golden eagle sails high above the loch. One day I saw a gathering of golden eagles here. In brilliant sunshine the first eagle sailed easily above the narrow ridge, east of the loch. From a different direction a second eagle appeared, then a third, fourth, and finally a fifth. High above the corrie the five magnificent birds met, flying up from north, south, east, and west. In the deep blue of the sky they soared awhile, gliding as steadily as aeroplanes. One pair, rising into the easterly wind, swung in circles to an immense height. A white cloud was hanging fully 4000 feet above the corrie, and into the cloud one of the eagles sailed mysteriously, gliding into its billowy depths. The male bird of the

second pair swiftly dipped towards his larger mate. She, crossing above the barren cone of Sgurr Dubh, dropped, plummet-like, earthward in two magnificent headlong dives of frightful impetus. Finally this pair of eagles sailed leisurely across the smooth rock walls of Sgurr Sgumban, casting dark shadows on its glistening snowfields. One after another the five eagles disappeared from view, and the sky was void of bird-life as before.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### THE TOURIST COMES

The Tourist comes, and poetry flies before him as the red man flies before the white. His Tweeds will make the secret top of Sinai commonplace some day, and at the clangour of the brass band the last eagle will take his flight.

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH

### THE BETTER PART

We came into close contact with *Aquila chrysaetus* when one of the men arrived at the lodge with a fine specimen carefully enveloped in his jacket; he had found it in a trap set for foxes. This eagle—a very large one—had been held by blunt teeth on the hardest part of his leg, and was quite uninjured. We photographed him and let him go; he showed no fear, rather disdain and indignation at the outrage he had been subjected to. The injured one in the affair was the stalker, who, after a very uncomfortable six-miles' walk, had looked forward to some treatment being dealt out to his captive which would lead to a visit to a bird-stuffer and a glass-case.

*Wild Sport and Some Stories.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### THE FOX AND THE EAGLE

About nine-forty-five of a morning in late September 1919 I started off from Lochs to the hill. I noticed an eagle, flying very low down; it appeared to be trying to seize a rabbit—there were then a lot of them in that neighbourhood. When about two hundred and fifty yards from me the bird settled on a round rock about the size of a small dining-room table. I sat down and put the glass on it. To my amazement I saw walking round the rock, and absolutely touching it, a very large dog-fox. He carried his brush straight in the air and the eagle kept making pecks at it. Every time this happened the fox dropped his brush, and then raised it again. This lasted for about three minutes. The eagle then flopped off the rock and settled down some eighty yards away on the ground. The fox at once advanced towards it in a series of short bounds, and, when stationary, had his nose on his forefeet straight in front of him. The eagle was watching him and kept pecking the air towards him. When the fox got within about two yards the eagle flew off; the fox, after a minute or two, also took his departure up the hill. Throughout this strange meeting the whole attitude of the bird and animal was that of play, not of fight. It was easily the most interesting thing I have seen on the hill in twenty-five years' experience.

*Deer-Stalking in Scotland.* ALEX. I. MCCONNOCHIE

### A FLYING LESSON

On one occasion while spying for deer I noticed an eagle over a narrow corrie some distance ahead. He dropped something from his talons and soon dived after it. "Lost hold of his prey", I thought. The intervening hill prevented a full view, but in a little the eagle reappeared with the object he had

dropped again in his talons. Regaining his previous altitude he again dropped the object and again dived. This proved that whatever he was doing his actions were intentional, and, curious to know what was happening, I turned the telescope in his direction. In a little he rose again, and as he was not a mile distant, I could make out the object he held was a bird. Again he released the hold and the bird fell. I was astonished to see that the bird was alive, and much more so when I made out beyond dispute that it was one of his own young ones. Once free of the parental hold, the little creature spread out its wings in an effort to fly, but the endeavour was ineffectual, and only served to retard its descent.

Unfortunately, I could not see him catch it again, as the hill intervened, but that he did so without inflicting the least injury was apparent. For some little time this proceeding went on, but finally the eagle flew off with his burden. I have never seen a similar instance before or since, and have frequently wondered what the cause of it could have been. It really looked as if the eagle were teaching its young one to fly; but then instinct teaches all young birds to fly just the same as it teaches the youngest spider to spin its web as well as the oldest one. Among the wild creatures, instinct is the universal schoolmaster. How, then, account for the peculiar behaviour of the eagle in this instance?

*Days on the Hill. "AN OLD STALKER"*

### THE FISH DINNER

A stalker and his "gentleman" were sitting upon a great mountain in the West. It was a still and sunny day with a golden eagle wheeling far up in the blue heart of it. Below them, by five hundred sheer feet was a deep water, a sea-loch, or salt waterway, among the high hills. A school of fish was taking it and, to do so, they had to run over a sand bar. In the renewed

joy of the exuberant, deep, green tide, every now and then (they were small grilse) one would go madly leaping, again and again, into the light of day. Idly the glasses were turned down upon the water, when, with a mighty roar of sound, close-winged past the eyes of the watchers, the eagle fell. Simultaneously a grilse, a quivering bow of silver, leapt and hung, at apogee, for a second in the bright air. A fatal second, for the eagle has him. There is a moment or two's "hang" and struggle, a beating fury of great wings, and then, Her Majesty recovering herself, sweeps relentlessly up with him and away.

The rifle exclaims loudly at the dispensation of it. "What made her stoop", cries he; "no fish was showing when she passed us?"

"It iss a clear day", says the Highlander; "the water too iss clear and calm; she would be seeing the *feesh* make up to leap while it wass yet under the sea, and it wass then that she would fa-al."

*At the Sign of the Dog and Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS



# THE ROE



*Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.*

KING SOLOMON

*By those wild eyes like the roe*  
*Ζώη μου σὰς ἀγαπῶ.*

LORD BYRON

*Always graceful.*

CHARLES ST. JOHN

*The bride hath paced into the hall,*  
*Red as a roe is she.*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE





## THE ROE

### THE HORNS OF ROE

FOR his size a roebuck puts out a wonderful amount of horn-growth; he only stands from 25 to 27 inches at the shoulder, and a good pair of horns will measure 9 inches, a third of his height!

The normal full-grown head of a roebuck carries six points.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE WEIGHT OF ROE

A full-grown Scottish buck will stand about 26 inches at the shoulder, though it is very difficult to attempt to give any kind of average for weight. Roe weighed at Ledgowan, in Ross-shire, where they do not reach their best development, never weighed more than 35 lbs. and were often below this. At Inversanda, in Argyllshire, a buck as he fell weighed 56 lbs. At Westerton, where there are very good roe, William M'Kid, the keeper, who, with James Duncan at Rothiemurchus, knows more about roe than any keeper I have ever met, tells me that the biggest buck he ever saw weighed 60 lbs. without the gralloch, which is an astonishing weight. At Drummuir a buck killed in December 1922 weighed as he fell 64 lbs. I think, however, that the average buck would normally weigh in Scotland about 45 lbs.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### STALKING THE ROE

It is a thousand pities that more people do not cultivate the art of roe-stalking with a rifle, for it is an art. It can be enjoyed at times when no other kind of shooting is available, for the buck carries his horns from the end of May or early June to the end of November or thereabouts. Nor need it interfere with other shooting, for the best time, by far, to stalk is in the very early morning.

Those early morning stalks after roe stand out for me above all other joys. The grey shadows, gradually becoming luminous at the approaching dawn, the awakening life, the dew-drenched verdure underfoot, combine, with the uplifting of one's whole being to all that is fresh and clean, to render one for a few brief, precious moments the man one might have been. Do others, I wonder, under such conditions share the dreams which come to me? Do they too pass into the Enchanted Wood whose sunlit glades are bright with never-fading flowers, where time stands still and ageless youth for ever dwells? "O! mihi praeteritos referat si Iupiter annos!" How many times has the old Roman's passionate prayer echoed down the passing years!

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE SCENT OF ROE

The scent of roe is acute and jealous of the wind. We have approached them within ten paces without discovery by sight or sound; but at three hundred yards, when crossing the wind, every head was up; and though we were perfectly concealed from sight, their little black noses were bobbing about on the breeze like the horizontal vanes of French fishing-boats, and

in an instant every "croc" was turned, and their white little targets tilting over the brackens like snowballs.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE ROEBUCK

What a beautiful thoroughbred-looking creature he is—a very fairy of the woods! A roe, threading his path through birch and bracken, or standing for a moment in some open glade with graceful head turned towards the intruder, looks, what he is, no trespasser, but tenant in fee by right of birth and prescription as one of the oldest inhabitants. His big brother the stag is perhaps a grander object, but, as far as grace of motion is concerned, clumsy in comparison. His dappled cousin the fallow-buck may have come over before the Conqueror, but is undoubtedly a foreign intruder of Asiatic origin, although long settled in his adopted home. And if the claim of ancient lineage and descent is not acknowledged in this revolutionary age, the roe can appeal to the sympathies of the most ardent democrat on the ground of his unquenchable love of liberty. Stag and hind, fallow-buck and doe, take kindly enough to a semi-domestic life, and are familiar objects in parks and paddocks all over England; but the roe does not readily brook confinement within a narrow fence, running round and round, seeking an outlet for escape, until death terminates his captivity.

*Autumns in Argyleshire. A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY*

### ROE-BAITING

Baiting is driving the deer with hounds, by the cry of which the hunter "checks", that is, meets the deer, and shoots them at the passes or the water. In the present day, when the deer

preserves are isolated, with no general head through the country to prevent their dispersion, the proprietors are cautious of using hounds from the disturbance which it gives to the forest. In very large woods, however, the bait may be safely pursued against roe. Beyond all comparison, it is the most noble, scientific, and highest enjoyment of the chase, uniting all the cheer, music, and working of dogs, with the personal skill of the stalker, and the individual excitement of the shot.

The best dogs for general use are strong beagles, or rough wiry harriers, of which three or four couple may be cast off according to the ground. Though previously broken for other chases, they will soon be entered to roe, for the scent of these animals is stronger than that of red deer, and even so attractive, that foxhounds in pursuit will break upon a buck; but while his danger is thus greater, and his strength of endurance less than that of the stag, nature has remunerated him with greater speed for a burst, and more resources of artifice and instinct. In small woods the guns should be posted round its skirts, taking particular care of its *extremity*, pointing towards another cover or to the hill. Large extents, however, should be taken in divisions, for when not too hard pressed, and particularly in thick woods, the roe will make his "treasons", or run in circles and doubles for a considerable time, before he breaks straight away, and in thick whin covers he will creep and wind like a hare. In all woods the runs of the roe are established paths, on which they travel as regularly as their biped pursuer on his turnpike road. So fond are they of a path, that even upon smooth turf, where a way has been cut through a growth of green brackens, they have immediately adopted it, and ever after, even when the ferns were dead or extirpated, kept it as their own beaten track at all seasons. Their runs being thus regular and easily ascertained, if guns are posted on all the principal passes, it is almost a certainty that the deer must be met at one or another. But if the guns are not sufficiently

numerous to stop all the "ballachs", the sport becomes still more inciting; for when the roe has refused the passes of those stationed, they must endeavour to cross him at some other, and it then becomes a trial of skill and experience between the hunter and the deer. In this contest it is indispensable that the former should be perfectly acquainted with the runs and passes; it is of no use to pursue at random, for the deer invariably keeps his paths, and it is only in these that he will be met. In running, until he begins to be hard pressed and long harassed, the roe rarely doubles or retraces his back foot. This he reserves for his jeopardies, when, becoming blown and weary, he finds that the dogs are driving him without fault. Before this extremity, he runs in circles at first of a wide extent, and in bold bursts, for his speed being so far superior to that of the hounds, he soon throws them behind him, and when the sound of their tongue fails, he stops, and stands immovably still in some thicket or under some height, generally with his back still to the dogs, and either "regardant" over his shoulder, or with his ears bent hindward towards the direction from which he has come. At first, his pauses are short, and as he hears the dogs approach, he shoots away before them; but after having been repeatedly started, he reserves his strength and wind, and will stand, even when the hounds are in sight, calmly watching them until they are within a hundred yards, when he will again burst and distance them. Meanwhile, the hunter, who knows his accustomed runs, and learns from the cry of the dogs which he is taking, must endeavour to cross him in his circles, and meet him in his passes. If he does not know the runs, or wants judgment in his counterchecks—or if the buck is possessed by a running devil, and outmanœuvres him when he finds that the dogs persecute him, and that he cannot throw them out, he will go to any water which he can find, and, walking for some distance up the stream, which takes away his scent, will stand in the current while the dogs are at fault;

and if the dogs are not as cunning as himself, or if the hunter does not find his entry, they will probably be thrown out; and even when an old experienced hound, who knows very well he cannot have vanished at the banks, hunts them up with indefatigable perseverance, the buck will often stand in the burn till the old toller gives the view roar.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### A PET ROE

A tame roe used to follow the children everywhere round the old castle of Duntroon, and even up the stairs and into the rooms. One of his little playfellows had been obliged to give up his room to a gentleman who had come to stay there, and the surprise of the guest was unbounded when the head and neck of a roe protruded through his half-open door. "Dear me!" he said; "game must be extremely plentiful in these parts!"

*Autumns in Argyleshire. A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY*

### "THAT GOOD LITTLE BEAST THE ROE"

Roe-shooting is a subject on which I do not much like to write. A roe is so pretty, and cries so like a child when hurt, that I very much dislike killing one. Last year, at a big wild-boar drive in the Ardennes, I was next to a man who has shot many boar and deer. A fine roebuck passed slowly close to him and he did not even take up his gun, although he had a pair, in the usual way, lying cocked on his "rest". When that beat was over I asked him why he did not shoot. He said that the little buck came along skipping, and, as the wind blew the

dead leaves about on the snow, he played about and hit at them with his forefeet like a kitten, until he could not find it in his heart to kill the little animal.

If a roe *has* to be shot, however, he should be shot with a rifle as befits a deer, not with a shot-gun. In cover shooting, where roe and small game come together, and there are a lot of beaters about, this is not practicable, but in such cases I would prefer to say that no roe should be shot at, and leave them for another time, and then stalk them properly with a rifle.

A roe is very hard to stalk. They are so restless that if you see one in a clearing, and take half an hour to get to him, it is ten chances to one he will be gone when you get there, even if he has not seen you or got your wind. You have to make the stalk as short and simple as possible. In the early morning, or just before sunset, you may get a chance at a roe near water or in corn. Roe generally go in a family party, and that is another reason why I do not like to kill them. The little doe calls and frets after the buck if he is shot. With fallow and red deer, where one male goes with as large a herd of hinds, or does, as he can keep together, the ladies of his family are glad of an excuse to get away with a fresh husband when he is killed, and do not fret after him, as the well-known French saying testifies.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### THE "TWO YOUNG ROES"

There noonday did—as noondays will,  
When Spring is sib to Summer—drowse;  
The red grouse called upon the hill  
And challenged on the sunny knowes;  
But in the pinewood all was still  
Save for the ceaseless breathe of boughs.



With green and beckoning fingers bent  
The bracken fronds like questions stood;  
The wood bees on their business went  
Sweet-laden in the solitude;  
"Hush", said the pines, then lo! we leant  
Above the babies in the wood.

Like little pancakes, flatly down,  
Two little fawns close, close were laid,  
Cradled beneath the quiet crown  
Of dappled shine and birchen shade;  
Their eyes were very big and brown,  
Their innocence was unafraid.

There to the forest's fond refrain,  
A softly breathing gold they lay;  
Gold shadows made them counterpane,  
Two little roes and twin were they;  
We drew their curtain back again  
And left them to their summer day.

When the Wise King that Maytime knows  
Once made a Song for you and me,  
He named two little new-born roes  
To serve his loveliest simile  
Which I would venture surely shows  
How very wise a king was he.

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

*By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch"*

### A LITTLE MUSIC

In a larch plantation, close to our doors, a couple of does  
lived all summer. The larger had twins and the other a single

fawn, which they constantly brought within gunshot of the drawing-room window; and when singing was going on, would pause with great curiosity and apparent pleasure. There could be nothing more beautiful in nature than the fairy-like fawns frisking around their graceful mothers, listening to the music in rapt surprise.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### THE SPANING TREE

Near Belleville, in Inverness-shire, there is a finely wooded range of rocks, containing Borlam's Cave; the haunt of the last Highland cateran, who was proprietor of Belleville. In cutting a path to this cave, one of the party of Highland labourers, whom I took with me for that purpose, asked me if I had seen the spaning (weaning) tree of the roe deer, and pointed out one close by us, which, but for this notification, would have fallen under the axe. This tree was a small birch one, that stood nearly in the middle of a regular oval ring, formed and trodden down with the feet of the roe deer, who run round and round the tree, followed by their young, in order to amuse them at the time when they are weaned. My informant assured me that he had seen the deer engaged in this sport, and I have myself seen and shown to others the foot-marks of the old and young deer in different parts of the ring round the birch-tree; at one end of the ring there was a small oval, giving the whole appearance of the figure 8.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE



# A ROGUE'S GALLERY



*Oh, what a deevil, a deevil, a deevil,  
Oh, what a deevil is John;  
Dinna think me unceevil to ca' him a deevil  
Till ye hear how the deevil gangs on!*

GEORGE OUTRAM



## A ROGUE'S GALLERY

### THE BUTCHER

WE drove out to Culloden, and stood on the moor at sunset. Here the butcher Cumberland trod out romance.

*A Summer in Skye.* ALEXANDER SMITH

### THE PEDESTRIAN

A friend of mine who ripened into a grand deer-stalker and sportsman, in his very earliest years went, full of ardour, to the castle of a Scotch grandee, the lord of many glens and corries, to visit whom and to be free of whose forest had been the dream of his life. There, after a night sleepless from excitement and full of the visions of the stag-glories of the morrow, he chanced, as he passed through some room or passage on his way to breakfast on the eventful morning, to overhear his host's voice in the next room, and though not according to his wont some fascination induced him to stop and listen, and this is the appalling dialogue which he heard.

*The Duke.* Donald! young Lord —— (himself) will go on the hill to-day.

*Donald.* Yes, your Grace.

*The Duke.* Where will you take him?

*Donald.* Well, your Grace, is he to kill a stag, or have a shot, or only see deer, or just go for a wa-a-lk?

Long and terrible was the pause, and painfully excited the interest of the listener, before, in grave measured tones, the evidently well-weighed and thought-out decision reached his ear, "Well, Donald, you may just take him a walk!" I never heard, or forget, the sequel—possibly there was none.

*Sport.* W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT

### A TRAITOR

I was once taken for a "walk" by a stalker, but not being quite such a fool as he thought me—though there was plenty of margin—I detected his treachery at once, and at once came to an understanding with him. "There", I said, "are the deer." The lazy hound had been lying on his back "spying" them and some others miles off for hours. I had selected my stag long ago, and seeing the day slipping away, I had at last roused him up to try for him, when he started on a course which was obviously the wrong one. "Here, you see, is the wind. If you go that way you will not 'get in', you will have a dangerous wind and exposed ground to cross. If you go this way you will have a good wind and shelter all the way up to the final stalk, and as I believe your employer wishes me to get a stag, whatever you may do, I mean to go this way, and if you don't mean to help me, say so, and I shall either try them alone or go straight home."

Then he altered his tone completely, but I marked and afterwards remembered a vindictive look in his eye. "Of course that *seemed* the best way, but the wind blew quite differently below", etc. etc., "however, he would try it." The wind did *not* blow differently below; without the least difficulty we got in and crawled up to a mossy knoll not fifty yards below which I knew the stag was feeding. Then before I could stop him or quite get up to his side—he was crawling first—he raised his

head over the top of the knoll, and after a good look bobbed it suddenly down, and beckoning me up handed me the rifle, making gestures with the other hand signifying that the stag was immediately below. "Noo's your time", he whispered, as I silently cocked the rifle and slowly raised my head above the knoll. Horror! There was the stag in the middle of half a dozen deer galloping down the hill as hard as he could go. I sprang to my feet and, his haunches being well towards me, I let fly a snapshot at the back of his neck as he was disappearing over the next ridge, and though the distance was well under eighty yards, of course I missed him. Never can I forget the expression of affected surprise, mingled with gratified animosity and triumphant low cunning which burned with an evil gleam on the usually blank face of the traitor as he almost *chuckled* out, "Well, you haf missed him, but he was ferry near!"

It is almost incredible, but I kept my temper. I did not strike him, or even call him one of the wicked names which crowded in such tumultuous numbers to my lips. I was quite quiet, and only said, "How clumsily you did that; you might easily have frightened him without showing yourself up to me as you did. Please show me the nearest way home!" Not one other word did I utter, except to request the villain to keep silent, when he, with floods of lies, called upon his Maker—*his* Maker!—to witness that he had not put the deer off.

*Sport.* W. BROMLEY-DAVENPORT

### DANGER SIGNALS

When stags in parks refuse to move out of the way, show the whites of the eyes, and lower their ears on the approach of man, they should be killed at once. Such deer are becoming dangerous, and if allowed to live will do some mischief. In fact



in the ensuing "rut" they will change from being passive to active enemies.

*The Mammals of Great Britain.* J. G. MILLAIS

### THE CURE FOR DISTEMPER

As an amusing instance of the undesirability of keeping tame stags, Sir Douglas Brook sends the following note:

"A farmer who breeds a good many horses asked me to give him a stag calf to *keep the distemper away from his horses!* According to him a hind was no use. I gave him a male calf on condition that if he got tired of it I was to have the first refusal. Eighteen months afterwards—i.e. the stag's first rutting season—the farmer came to me to say that the stag was trying to chase all his cows, and came into the house, turned everybody out, broke all the china, ate all the potatoes, etc., and would I kindly take him back.

"I told him to bring the stag over for me to look at. A few days after I saw a herd of about fifteen cows coming down the avenue, and on going out to see what it was all about, found my friend the stag in the middle, the farmer having had to drive down all his cattle in order to get the deer to travel the eleven miles between our houses. I put the beast in the park, but he was impossible, and is now eating biscuits at the Dublin Zoo. This deer was a long way the finest yearling I have ever seen, having had as much corn and milk as he could eat."

*The Mammals of Great Britain.* J. G. MILLAIS

### A TAME STAG

A stalker at Lochrosque in the 'eighties had a nasty adventure. Duncan Fraser by name, he was digging potatoes in an enclosure in which was kept a tame stag. Hearing a noise be-

hind him, he looked round to see the beast charging him. So close was the animal that he had no time to turn, and received a severe blow in the back, the horns passing on each side of his body under his arms. He fell forward clutching the horns, of which he dared not let go. There were some cottages about three hundred yards off, and he yelled for help with all the power of his lungs. For long no one paid any attention, those who heard his cries saying afterwards that, though they heard them, they did not think they were of any consequence! For over half an hour Fraser remained struggling with the stag in this terrible position, and eventually, help arriving, the beast was driven off with sticks. The man was terribly knocked about and was in bed for six weeks as a result of the injuries he sustained.

Two years later this same stag killed a stalker, John M'Lennan. The case is well known. His battered spyglass and broken stick were found beside his body, showing that he put up a good fight for his life. The stag knew him well, as he was accustomed to feed it; but as has been remarked before, deer seem incapable of displaying any affection for their benefactors.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE CARROTS

When there were tame hinds on the Jura home ground, it amused the daughters of the house to hand-feed them in autumn with carrots. A wild stag took possession of these hinds, and at the first appearance of the carrots, though he remained at a respectful distance, he displayed such evident displeasure that one of the sisters declined to go again. Two went on the next evening, and it was agreed that one should watch the stag while the other fed the hinds. This time the stag approached to within a stone's throw, presenting a perfect picture

of jealous rage. He struck the ground with his forefeet, and flung the peat-moss far and wide with vicious sweeps of his fine antlers, uttering tremendous and continued roars. The younger sister, who had watched the stag, declined to go again, but the elder, with uncommon pluck, went for the third time on her own account. The stag had now come to the end of his tether, and walked straight to the girl without stopping. She managed to retreat in good order, but at the risk of her life, and the stag was left in possession.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### THE PROHIBITIONIST

An instance shows the cunning as well as the fierceness of a stag. He had been kept for some time in a large enclosure in a forest, and had been let out. An old friend of mine, whose long and prosperous life had been spent in farming a small holding, and making a great deal of whisky for which the Revenue received no duty, was one day busied about the shore of a loch when he saw this stag coming down from the hill towards him. The beast had not a very good reputation, and the old man made for the peat-stack, which was luckily near at hand, and climbed on to the top of it. In a few seconds the stag was below, bellowing and grunting, and trying to rake the peats down with his horns. There was a heavy "punch" or crowbar leaning against the stack, and with this the besieged in his turn prodded at the deer, now and then getting in a good poke. Finally the latter went off out of sight behind a ridge, and the victor was left in triumph in his fortress. The boat in which he had crossed the loch lay some hundred yards or less away, and, when he had recovered his wind, he cautiously climbed down and made for it as fast as he could. The stag must have been keeping a sharp look-out, and the man had a second run

to make for his life. The deer dashed after him into the water, and *all but* caught him. Never before, I believe, did an ancient and heavily-built illicit distiller make such a desperate bound for safety as he did that day; small farming and smuggling would have come to a complete end, else, for him then.

*Wild Sport and Some Stories.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### A PARK STAG

An instance occurred in October 1836, of the ferocity of a red deer when confined in a park, which, from the courtesy of the gentleman to whom it happened, I am enabled to give circumstantially.

The Hon. Mr. and Mrs. Fox Maule had left Taymouth with the intention of proceeding towards Dalguise, and in driving through that part of the grounds where the red deer were kept, they suddenly, at a turn of the road, came upon the lord of the demesne, standing in the centre of the passage, as if prepared to dispute it against all comers.

Mr. Maule being aware that it might be dangerous to trifle with him, or to endeavour to drive him away (for it was the rutting season), cautioned the postillion to go slowly, and give the animal an opportunity of moving off.

This was done, and the stag retired to a small hollow by the side of the road; on the carriage passing, however, he took offence at its too near approach, and emerged at a slow and stately pace, till he arrived nearly parallel with it; Mr. Maule then desired the lad to increase his pace, being apprehensive of a charge on the broadside.

The deer, however, had other intentions, for as soon as the carriage moved quicker, he increased his pace also, and came on the road about twelve yards ahead of it, for the purpose of crossing, as it was thought, to a lower range of the park; but

to the astonishment, and no little alarm of the occupants of the carriage, he charged the offside horse, plunging his long brow antler into his chest, and otherwise cutting him.

The horse that was wounded made two violent kicks, and is supposed to have struck the stag, and then the pair instantly ran off the road; and it was owing solely to the admirable presence of mind and nerve of the postillion, that the carriage was not precipitated over the neighbouring bank. The horses were not allowed to stop till they reached the gate, although the blood was pouring from the wounded animal in a stream as thick as a man's finger. He was then taken out of the carriage, and only survived two or three hours. The stag was shortly afterwards killed.<sup>1</sup>

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

<sup>1</sup> To celebrate this incident of their honeymoon Lord Breadalbane gave Mr. and Mrs. Maule a pipe of port bottled off into bottles bearing a stag's head. Some houses in Scotland may to this day possess one or more of these bottles ("toom" now, I expect), since Mr. Maule gave many away as curiosities.

P. R. C.

# BOGLES AND BROWNIES

*Warlocks and witches in a dance.*

ROBERT BURNS

*And all of us other children  
When the supper things is done,  
We sits around the kitchen fire  
An' has the mostest fun,  
A-listenin' to the ghost tales  
'At Annie tells about,  
An' the Gobble Uns 'at gets you  
If you don't  
watch  
out!*

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

*And Nick'em said "Yow, Yow," and ran in below the dresser.*

TIE SMOKY LUM



## BOGLES AND BROWNIES

### *THE STRANGE MEN*

“You have been stalking in ——?” the stalker asked, “you will mind the Long Corrie—it’s more a glen than a corrie—which runs down from the little lochans to the big one? Well, I was coming down that glen one evening with my master and a gillie. We had got a stag that afternoon by one of the little lochs, a decent beast with one strong horn. My master was tired that evening, and was walking slowly down the path. There is a good pony path there now, but at the time I am speaking of, more than forty years ago, there was only a poor kind of a track, which kept near the burn all the way to the loch. The gillie and I were behind a little; suddenly, in front of us, we heard the sound of men laughing and talking. My master stopped, and we came up with him and listened. Just in front of us, but out of sight yet, was more than one man, and what they could be doing in the forest so far from any house or road at that time of evening—it was October, and nearer six than five o’clock—we could not think. The laughing and the talking came on; shrill and loud and quick it was; I never heard men laugh or talk like that, either before or since. And then they came round the corner; there were four of them; they were all in black, and seemed to have white cloths about their necks, and gey white faces as far as we could tell. Half of their faces and necks were hid from us, for the four were



bearing a coffin on their shoulders; they were swaying about and laughing as they came along. Well, sir, if it was a strange thing for four men in black clothes to be in a deer forest with night coming on, that was a small matter compared with what they had with them.

"The track they were on went up for some three miles, to the place we had just come from, and then ended in peat-hags, and there was not a house or cottage or shelter of any kind whatever beyond it to which it was possible for them to get that night. Peter Mactavish's was the nearest house, and that was fully seventeen miles away, and across such a country as men could never bear a coffin in the daytime, let alone at night. So you may believe that we stared at the black people in front of us, and it was only because we all saw it that we believed our eyes. Then I heard my master clear his throat a little, as he often did when he was going to speak—when he was thinking what he was going to say—and the men came to a stand with their burden, and stopped their laughing and queer talk, and glowered at us. The words were long coming from my master's throat—if it was as dry as mine, I'm no wondering at that—and before he got them out they were useless. The track there lay high above the burn, maybe three hundred feet or so, and the slope down to it was not a precipice exactly, but near it, and steep and rocky, with bits of heather growing among the stones. Before a word was said the four men and the coffin lurched off the path, and went crashing down the hillside; we saw them for a little, swaying about just as they had done before above, and then lost sight of them, and then we heard a crash like as if the wood was broken up, and stones rattling and leaping downwards. And we heard more, and the sound set my teeth on edge, and I believe made my hair stand up: we heard again that queer laughing, just when one would expect to have heard cries of pain and fear. They rolled down, down to the bottom, and then there was

quiet: we went on a few yards, and there was an ill close smell in the fresh air—just where they had been standing.”

“And what happened?”

“Nothing happened: we went down to look at the place. We went the next morning. My master said it was no use going then, and we thought he was right; and, sir, you may believe me or not, but there was no coffin and no black men at the bottom of the place, and no mark on the slope of anyone having ever gone down it. We could not see a stone out of its place: it took us all our time in the daylight to get down, so you may know what sort of ground it was. And there was nothing.”

“It was unsatisfactory not to know something about those men.”

“It was a deal more satisfactory to know nothing about them at all,” said the old stalker briskly. “The less kent about such folk the better. And”, he added reverently, “God preserve all of us from ever meeting the like of them again!”

*Wild Sport and Some Stories.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### WHEN THERE WERE NONE ASTEER

It was not long before strange things were told of “sights” and “sounds”, beyond the wind and the river—“cerie voices” and “awsum shapes”, that walked in the forest when there were none asteer but the owl upon the tree and the buck upon the holm.

“Auld Jennie Sax-pens” had seen “grecy lang nebbit things wi’ heids like deid haddies, sittin’ croonin’ and ta’kin’ upon the crookit birk”; and “Robbie Cappie” declared that there was, “the Lord kent fhar, for he could neiver find it mair, a Pechd’s hoose in the brac, and a little wee green mannich that sat in it”,

and, by Robbie's account, for so long, that his beard had grown through a stone table, like that of the Emperor Barbarossa in the Castle of Kiffhausen.

*Lays of The Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE DWARFS

The domestic dwarfs of Britain were quiet and inoffensive little beings, seldom appeared unless to complain of some inconvenience offered by their human neighbours, and never occasioned any disturbance beyond a peal of little laughter, or a chorus of shouts and songs, which sometimes ascended out of the cellar. But amidst the desolate moors of Scotland the dwarfs were supposed to be of a malignant and mischievous character. Thus the brown man of the moors was believed to rend in pieces those whom he encountered; and another as diminutive in person, but with a mighty head, gave death by a single look. Wayward and whimsical, they were not however altogether insensible of the merits of men, and sometimes did them good, and presented them with precious gifts in return for courtesy or kindness, or when incited by mortal love.

*Lays of The Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE HUMPBAC

There is the tale of the humpbacked man who lived at Balnahard, and left his home on Hogmanay to buy stores for the New Year at Scalasaig. Passing a green knowe overlooking Killoran Bay he suddenly came upon the fairies dancing upon the hillside to a measure, the tune of which went to the words, "Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday".



"LIKE LITTLE BLACK GHOSTS"



There was something wrong with the dance, and the little revellers were evidently disconcerted; they were out of time and tune. The mistake flashed upon him suddenly; he called out "Wednesday" at the proper moment and set them right. The fairies took up the correction, sang the song right and trod the measure correctly. The hillock then opened and the fairies disappeared, taking the man down with them to their subterranean home where, to reward his kindness, they removed his hump, and sent him back to earth loosed from his infirmity.

*My Happy Hunting-Grounds.* A. E. GATHORNE-HARDY

"PUCK AND THE POACHER IN SPRING"

—“Yester eve when stars were up,  
I lay within a cowslip cup,  
And listed while the owls did cry  
To the bright moonlight merrily;  
Whenas along the lonely bent  
A homeward hunter whistling went;  
And while the moon came o’er him sheen,  
I marked he wore the Lincoln green.  
To see our wear so done amiss  
I might not dree—Yet sooth for this  
I had but broke his shins percase,  
Or marred his kirtle in a race;  
But at his back a set he bore,  
With a fat buck and birds full store,  
An forest-craft so thrive at spring  
They shall not leave a merle to sing,  
Nor spotted fawn to run the lea—  
But now, yon woodman ’scaped not free,  
As down the ferry craig he went  
A bramble for his foot I bent;

Then in the broom bush shouted high,  
And as he turned him suddenly  
Upon the tangled snare he tripped,  
An instant by a hazel gripped,  
But from the stem the bough I slipped,  
And like a whinstone from the steep  
He plunged amid the river deep—  
Five fathom down now lie his bones  
In the Clerk's pool, beneath the stones;  
His pearly eyes the kelpie stole,  
I wot the foul fiend nimmed his soul."

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### SERVE HIM RIGHT

Fairies are friendly and obliging for the most part, and there was no task too arduous for them. One day a man who had been annoyed by the fairies constantly demanding work gave them three tasks, each one more difficult than the last. The first two they accomplished, but when he gave them some creels without bottoms and told them to empty the Minch, they went off in high dudgeon and never offered to work for him again.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### THE EACH UISGE

The *Each Uisge*, or Water Horse, is still firmly believed in by many people in the Isle of Skye. He usually took the form of a magnificent black steed, but without a mane. He used to assume human form at will. A woman was out on the moor early one summer morning. She was met by a handsome

stranger who made love to her. They sat down, and the man laid his head on her lap. The woman was stroking his hair when suddenly she noticed sand in it. Her suspicions were aroused, but she continued to fondle him until he fell asleep. Then she succeeded in slipping off the apron upon which his head rested without awakening him, and fled homeward. As she neared her village she heard the infuriated *each uisge* neighing shrilly as he galloped after her, but she was able to reach home before he overtook her.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### THE LITTLE RED FELLOWS

In Coire Lagan is a lochan. It is a small tarn, but in its centre is a deep cavity where the water must be fifteen feet in depth. Perhaps a spring issues forth from the hill here; perhaps the hollow may have been scooped out by some whirlwind during a winter hurricane. The water of the lochan is tinged with green, for at dawn fairies cleanse their green garments in it. In Skye the lady fairies are dressed in green. The men are called the little red fellows—*na daoine beaga ruadh*—and are clad in crotal-dyed garments.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### THE CAILLACH

The witch was a great enemy of a shepherd. Every morning she would put on the shape of a hare, and run before his dogs, and lead them away from the sheep. He knew it was right to shoot at her with a crooked sixpence, and he hit her on the hind leg, and the dogs were after her, and chased the hare into the old woman's cottage. The shepherd ran after them, and



there he found them, tearing at the old woman; but the hare was twisted round their necks, and she was crying, "Tighten, hare, tighten!" and it was choking them. So he tore the hare off the dogs; and then the old woman begged him to save her from them, and she promised never to plague him again. "But if the old dog's teeth had been as sharp as the young one's, she would have been a dead woman."

*Angling Sketches.* ANDREW LANG

### THE VAMPIRES

Three shepherds at a lonely sheiling were discoursing of their loves, and it was, "Oh, how happy I should be if Katie were here, or Maggie, or Bessie!" as the case might be. So they would say and so they would wish, and lo! one evening, the three girls came to the door of the hut. So they made them welcome; but one of the shepherds was playing the Jew's harp, and he did not like the turn matters were taking.

The two others stole off into corners of the darkling hut with their lovers, but this prudent lad never took his lips off the Jew's harp.

"Harping is good if no ill follows it," said the semblance of his sweetheart; but he never answered. He played and thrummed, and out of one dark corner trickled red blood into the fire-light, and out of another corner came a current of blood to meet it. Then he slowly rose, still harping, and backed his way to the door, and fled into the hills from these cruel airy shapes of false desire.

"And do the people actually believe all that?"

"Ay, do they!"

*Angling Sketches.* ANDREW LANG

### THE UNCANNY RABBIT

But John Burns, the head-keeper, said there was something uncanny in the air, and that it was no good going out after deer any more. And he was confirmed in his opinions by the way in which we were again done the following day. On a bit of green on the moor, which had once been worked by some long ago dead and forgotten man, we saw a stag. When we got within shot of the green the stag had disappeared, and we never saw him again. But, on the very spot on which he had been standing, sat a huge rabbit. One of its ears stuck up and one lay down, and there was a something in the expression of its countenance which told us we were looking at no ordinary beast.

"We must go and shoot partridges to-morrow," said John Burns.

*Wild Sport with Gun, Rifle, and Salmon-Rod.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY

### THE VISITANT

I remember an old forester telling me with bated breath, how one day at a deer drive, he and a friend, early in the morning, but long after sunrise, *both* saw the forester of an adjoining ground approaching them; each knew him well, and thinking he had come to lend a hand at the sport, each hailed him with a shout of welcome: their friend continued to advance until quite close on them, when he suddenly vanished! Strange to say, this story did not wind up with the fact that the man whose apparition had been seen had died at the very moment of his appearance to his friends. "He was just fretting to be wi' us", was my old friend's explanation; one which appeared natural and satisfactory to him, and in the usual order of events, and who can say for certain that he is so utterly wrong?

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

*A FEARFUL EXPERIENCE*

Two Lochaber men had a fearful experience. They had spent several fruitless days on the hills, sleeping in the open, and had resolved to return, empty-handed though they were. Just as they set out homewards, they fell in with a little man, who, from his grey hairs and thin, weak body, was evidently very old. As he said he was hungry, they gave him of their bread and cheese; nor was he ungrateful, though, when offered whisky, he, to their surprise, firmly declined it. His dress suggested that he was a shepherd, so they enquired of him if he had recently seen any deer, at the same time telling him of their bad luck. Even as they spoke he vanished, and as they reflected on his peculiar disappearance they recollected that their meeting also seemed somewhat odd. Continuing their way homewards, they came in sight of a stag, which, with apparently a very good body, had a poor head. With some trouble they stalked and killed it, when they found that it was an old, useless beast. On gralloching, they were horrified to find the bread and cheese they had given the old man!

*The Deer and Deer Forests of Scotland.* ALEX. I. McCONNOCHE

*THE MAID OF DOUNE*

Murdoch of Gaick was a celebrated stalker who hunted all over Badenoch without troubling to ask anyone's permission. On a certain occasion he had been out for several days, and had had no luck in the forest, when at last he got within shot of a hind on the Doune. When he had taken careful aim, he was horrified to find that his arrow pointed to a young woman; down went the bow, and a hind took her place. Time after time he took aim at the changing figure, till at last, wearied and

exasperated, he fired, as the sun set, and down fell a hind. As he walked towards his venison he became overpowered, and heard a supernatural voice exclaiming: "Murdoch, Murdoch! You have this day slain the only maid of the Doune." On which the poacher jumped up, replying, as he ran off at his best speed: "If I have killed her you may eat her".

*The Deer and Deer Forests of Scotland.* ALEX. I. MCCONNOCHIE

### THE DAIRYMAIDS

Murdoch, a noted deer-stalker, went at sunrise into the forest, and, discovering some deer at a distance, he stalked till he came pretty near them, but not quite within shot. On looking over a knoll, he was astonished at seeing a number of little neat women, dressed in green, in the act of milking the hinds. These he knew at once to be fairies; one of them had a hank of green yarn thrown over her shoulder, and the hind she was milking made a grab at the yarn with her mouth and swallowed it. The irritable little fairy struck the hind with the band with which she had tied its hind legs, saying at the same time, "May a dart from Murdoch's quiver pierce your side before night"; for the fairies, it seems, were well apprised of Murdoch's skill in deer-killing. In the course of the day he killed a hind, and in taking out the entrails he found the identical green hank that he saw the deer swallow in the morning. This hank, it is said, was preserved for a long period as a testimony of the occurrence.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE PAGEANT OF THE FOREST

The sun shone warm on the heather above the beallach: its mellow rays lit up the great flat which lay to the eastward,

dotted and lined with brown ridges and little peaks. The rifle thought of the strange eyes which must have regarded them, in times before Scotland had a name or a history, of people who must have passed by just where he was resting, and gone through that place, of strange unknown beasts to whose dens it had been a passage.

"What a sight it would be", he exclaimed, "to see all the deer which have ever gone through there, go through there now before us!"

"That would be a strange and wonderful sight", agreed the stalker; "there would be many hundreds—there would be many thousand millions."

"There would be some noble heads", the other said. He lay back on the sun-warmed heather and thought of the ancient days. Perhaps in five hundred centuries some being would sit here and wonder as he was wondering. Those prehistoric people found it no more strange to gaze on prehistoric creatures than he did to look at a stag now.

Suddenly his eye, carelessly wandering over the flat to the east, caught sight of movement; a closer look showed him this was caused by deer, and that they were coming up-wind towards the pass. There were about fifty, and he could see by the glass they were all hinds. They came on and on. "Now", he thought, "they are not more than a mile away; when they reach that little burn they will get our wind." But the deer passed the burn and came steadily westward, until half a mile only lay between them and the bealach. It was strange that not one of a hundred nostrils should feel the taint in the air, and the watcher looked to where his companion sat, a few feet away: the old man was sitting up intently staring at them with a puzzled expression on his face.

Still the hinds came on, and now it was apparent that they were not alone, but that following into the burn that they had left—dotting its steep sides with their light brown and duns—

were more deer. And behind these came yet more: as fast as one mass filed out of the hollow it was occupied by others. The watcher turned his glass on a ridge a mile beyond the burn which had been his mark—that too was covered with them; he looked farther east and saw still more; he fixed it on the slope of a hill some six miles away, and plain enough on the sky-line he saw them there, a ragged line. The four-mile flat below him, the great easily rising slope stretching for miles towards the south, the broken ground to the left, were all full of deer advancing in an interminable procession towards the ridge on which the men lay.

By this time the first noticed hinds were only three or four hundred yards off the little pass, and the wind was blowing fair in their faces. This fact might not carry much significance to a townsman or low-country man, but to one who knew the ways of deer it seemed only a little less than a miracle—it *was* a miracle: here was a herd of deer, with a face hundreds of yards wide and many scores deep, advancing up-wind with no signs of nervousness or fear right in the teeth of men not a quarter of a mile away. It was a phenomenon that the most ancient and experienced of foresters could hardly have dreamt of, much less have seen.

Then it came into one of those men's minds that the lightly-spoken wish of half an hour ago was going to be fulfilled; that it was about to be given to him to see what he had asked to see, and a great fear came upon him. To get up, to ask counsel from his companion, to speak at all, became beyond his power; he could only lie there and look at what was to be. The deer came on in orderly ranks, with no stopping or peering or nervous examination of the ground in front of them. In a few minutes the foremost entered the neck of the beallach, and here their ranks, confined by its narrowness, became closer. It was a short gunshot only across: they came and passed below him, and went through the two or three hundred yards of passage, and

out into the open country beyond, and not one of them showed the faintest sign of noticing their enemies. The first few hundred deer were all hinds and calves.

There passed then through that narrow beallach all the deer that at one time or another had passed through it when alive: hinds, not to be numbered, with their calves; the stags of last year, the stags of ten years ago, the stags of last century or a dozen centuries ago, the stags of times of which history can give no account, of periods of which geologists can only guess at. With perfect silence they passed through, in order as their place had been—the antlers of a hundred years ago dwarfed by those that followed, and these again looking small and poor in comparison with what was to come. There was no rattling of sharp hoofs on the stones, no sinking in and sudden pulling out of delicate feet in the peaty turf; a dozen hinds of to-day scampering by would have made a dozen times as much clamour as this great host. The myriads of dull eyes looked at the watchers, and each creature passed on in its rank, with no start or quickening of pace, with no acknowledgment or recognition of their presence. There was no confusion or hurry or jostling at the entrance to the pass; each knew its place and kept it.

On the far side of the pass was a little spring often visited by thirsty stalkers: there was a light hazy mist hanging about the spring, and at times it seemed to the watcher that he could see an indistinct form stationary beside it, and that when passing the place there was some slight movement of the deer towards it, as if they turned their heads that way. It was difficult to make out anything clearly: now he fancied he saw some outline high above the moving throng, and now that his eyes were deceived by some rock or shaded hollow of the hill. But of a sudden a puff of light wind blew through the gully and gently opened a passage through the mist, and then he saw that his first impression had been a right one. The ground here was

thickly carpeted by faded asphodels, and their dull red leaves, catching the sun for an instant, shone brightly out. Here stood, as motionless as if she had been carved out of white marble, a great hind; she stood with head turned at right angles to the passage and long lines of deer. On her back sat a stately figure: he caught sight for a little moment of a beautiful eager face, and of a body bending forwards as if examining the ranks which were passing in silent procession before her. The watcher shut his frightened eyes for a moment, and when he opened them the figure was stooping by the spring. Then the shreds of mist blew together again, and formed a dense veil, and shut out everything.

The great pageant was over: it had seemed long in passing, but as with a start and a shudder the young man stood up, he saw that the shadow of the hill had crept but a very little farther towards the east—just sufficient to cover the place where he had been lying. The stalker was asleep, with a troubled scared look on his lined face, and at the touch of the other's hand on his shoulder started as if he had been struck. He stared uneasily towards the flat, into the pass, and then got up and walked straight down to the spring. There was a tiny patch of soft silvery sand here, among the green moss where the water ran out, and on its smooth surface was a mark as if a naked foot had pressed it. With an eager exclamation the younger man pointed to it; the next moment the heavy boot of the stalker came down on the sand, and the footprint—if it was one—was obliterated for ever.

*Wild Sport and Some Stories.* GILFRID W. HARTLEY





# THE OBSOLETE



Robin! Robin! Robin! *all his merry thieves*  
*Answer to the bugle-call shivering through the leaves,*  
*Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,*  
*In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.*

ALFRED NOYES



# THE OBSOLETE

## THE SNOWS OF YESTER YEAR

WE are older and wiser now, but alas! do we have the same fun? I have ventured to criticise the proceedings in the Atholl forest in the days of Scrope. I wonder whether Tortoise, in the happy hunting-grounds—to the enjoyment of which he is, we may hope, admitted—knows that I too have sinned against the very rules which I have laid down as the canons of true deer forestry; that in the days of my youth I have gone out to the very middle of the forest with a couple of pure-bred deerhounds, accompanied by anyone of either sex who had sufficiently good wind, a supple figure, and active limbs, and coursed, yes, actually coursed, a cold stag—generally unsuccessfully—sometimes bringing him to bay, very rarely pulling him down. Let us draw a veil over these days of long ago with their joyous frivolities. Ah me! where are the good comrades of those times?

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

## ENTERTAINING ROYALTY

The Tainchel, or greater driving, is now entirely disused in Scotland. The most remarkable of these great huntings known to us were those given by the Earl of Atholl to King James V. and Queen Mary. The first of these was accompanied by that

extraordinary and lavish magnificence which frequently demonstrates that the descriptions and manners of the Romances of Chivalry were drawn from the real life of the Middle Ages. The account of the first chase is thus given by Lindsay of Pitscottie:

“The Earl of Athole, hearing of the king’s coming, made great provision for him in all things pertaining to a prince, that he was as well served and eased with all things necessary to his estate, as he had been in his own palace of Edinburgh. For I heard say, this noble earl gart make a curious palace to the king, and his mother, and the embasador, where they were as honorably eased and lodged as they had been in England, France, Italy, or Spain, concerning the time and the equivalent for their hunting and pastime, which was builded in the midst of a fair meadow, and the walls thereof was of green timber, woven with green birks that were green baith under and above, which was fashioned in four quarters, and in every quarter and neuk thereof, a great round, as it had been a block-house, which was lofted and joisted the space of three house height, the floors laid with green scarels, spreats, medwarts, and flowers, that no man knew whereon he zeid, but as he had been in a garden. Farther, there were two great rounds in ilk side of the gate, and a greit portcullis of tree falling down, with the manner of a barrace, with a draw brig, and a greit stank of water of sixteen foot deep, and thirty foot of breadth. And also, this palace within was hung with fine tapestry and arasses of silk, and lighted with fine glass windows in all airths; that this palace was as pleasantly decored with all necessities pertaining to a prince, as it had been his own palace royal at home. Farther, this earl gart make such provision for the king, and his mother, and the embasador, that they had all manner of meates, drinks, and delicates, that were to be gotten at that time in all Scotland, either in burgh or land; that is to say, all kind of drink, as ale, beer, wine, both white and clared, malvesy, muskadel, hippo-

cras, aquivite. Farther, there was of meats, wheat bread, maine bread, and ginge bread, with fleshes, beef, mutton, lamb, veal, venison, ghoose, grice, capon, coney, cran, swan, partridge, plover, duck, drake, brissel-cock,<sup>1</sup> and prawnes,<sup>2</sup> black cock, muirfowl, cappercaillies; and also the stancks that were round about the palace were full of all delicate fishes, as salmons, trouts, pearches, pikes, cels, and all other kinds of delicate fishes that could be gotten in fresh waters, and all ready for the banket. Syne there were proper stewards, cunning baxters, excellent cooks and potingers, with confections and drugs for their deserts; and the halls and chambers were prepared with costly bedding, vessels, and napery, according for a king, so that he wanted none of his orders, more than he had been at home in his own palace. The king remained in this wilderness at the hunting the space of three days and three nights, and his company, as I have shown. I heard men say it cost the Earl of Athole every day in expenses a thousand pounds."

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### OLD TOM BOOTH

The following finds place in the Church of St. Nicholas, Nottingham, to the credit of a once famous poacher:

Here lies a marksman, who, with art and skill,  
When young and strong, fat bucks and does did kill.  
Now conquered by grim death (go reader tell it)  
He's now took leave of powder, gun, and pellet;  
A fatal dart, which in the dark did fly,  
Has laid him down among the dead to lie.  
If any want to know the poor slave's name,  
'Tis Old Tom Booth, ne'er ask from whence he came.

---

<sup>1</sup> Turkeys.

<sup>2</sup> Peacocks.

He's hither sent; and surely such another  
Ne'er issued from the belly of a mother.

This epitaph was composed some time before the hero's death, and so delighted was he with it, that he had it graven upon a stone in anticipation of his own demise. He died in 1752, in his seventy-fifth year.

*Fur and Feather Series.* THE REV. H. A. MACPHERSON

### THE DUCAL MANNER

The Duke of Buckingham was invited to furnish a draught of the Whaddon deer for Windsor Forest—this was in 1685. He replied to the agent who approached him in the following words: "I cannot bring my mind down low enough to think of selling red deer, but if you believe that his Majesty would take it kindly of me, I will present him with ten brace of the best that I have".

*Fur and Feather Series.* THE REV. H. A. MACPHERSON

### THE HART ROYAL PROCLAIMED

Manwood mentions a fact, which he found on record in the Castle of Nottingham: it is dated in the time of Richard I., who, having roused a hart in the forest of Sherwood, pursued him as far as Barnsdale in Yorkshire, where the animal foiled and escaped his hounds. The king, in gratitude for the diversion he had received, ordered him to be immediately proclaimed at Tickill, and at all the neighbouring towns, the purport of which was to forbid anyone to molest him, that he might have free liberty to return to his forest.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

*A DEER-DRIVE AT DIAN'S*

It was on one of those three fine days that we had a week or so back, and the wood was like golden palaces with blue-and-gold ceilings. I'd *heard* that they'd got a faun come as under-keeper at Sir John's, but I'd forgotten it; still when I met a faun in Lower Wood I remembered at once. I knew he was a faun by his legs and by his small horns, curled flat like snail-shells in his crinkled carrots, hardly noticeable indeed, even had he been bareheaded, unless one had looked for them. For the rest he wore a dirty grey sweater and a disreputable Norfolk jacket that I recognised as having been young John's, who had, I remembered now, persuaded old Bagshot to engage "something classic" (he'd said) as second man.

The faun was a slang-looking fellow enough, with light dancing eyes (like Alan Breck's, I thought) in a high-boned impudent face of freckles, and with a cheerful mouthful of strong white teeth which he flashed in a friendly grin as he touched his cap.

"How d'you like your new job?" I asked him.

"What new job?" he said in the Berkshire Doric.

"Keepering," said I.

"No new job to *me*," he said; "been at it all my life. Faunus was my dad on Ida a mort o' years back; mother, she was kennelmaid to her ladyship Diana."

"But I thought Diana's young ladies——" I began.

"Dessay you did," he replied. "So you see I'm of keepering stock undoubted, and almost afore my horns curled mother said a word for me to her ladyship and I got a beat o' hers—none o' your fool pheasants, but the big dappled buck to move up to the bows——"

"Was Diana a good shot?" I interrupted.

"Tol-lol," he told me, "but jealous, to *be* sure, an' no proper



sportsman nohow. I remember one of her young lady-guests (a sweet pretty piece she was too, Miss Atalanta—red an' white as roses, an' royalty at that) wiping my lady's eye at the master buck o' my beat. A mighty fine arrow she made, I mind, an' the buck flipping through the trunks like a woodcock. I seed her ladyship wasn't best pleased (and so did Miss Atalanta), though my lady said 'Good *shot*, dear,' as polite as pie.

"After lunch I was stringing Miss Atalanta's bow for her before we began again, and I winks at her, knowing like.

"'I don't care,' she says, taking me up at once an' tossing her little head, an' I think she adds, '*the cat*,' but it might ha' been '*that*.'

"Just then her ladyship says, waspish, 'Where's that idiot Sylvester?' 'Oh, there you are,' says she. 'Put Miss Atalanta in the middle ride at Dryad's Oaks for the afternoon drive,' says she; 'with *the wind* like 'tis that's the very best place, I do believe.' I was wondering.

"Now we had a young gent out, uncertain young gent, but a smartish handy one to be *in* with when you're driving deer."

"I thought no gentlemen were allowed," I began.

"Bless your innercence," said he. "A Mr. Zephyrus, to do with the wind control. An' I was still wondering.

"Anyhow, when bows were placed an' I had the beaters ready to move, I slipped round to where Mr. Z was posted an' shoots at the venture. 'Her ladyship's compliments,' I says, 'but she's changed her mind; don't want that shift o' air as she asked you for just now; begs you'll carry on same as this morning.'

"'Oh, all right, keeper,' says he, 'but I thought she wanted——'

"'Well, she don't, sir,' said I; and so I left him, he twiddling his thumbs and making the big pines breathe like harps.

"Miss Atalanta got a buck for each of her three arrows, an'

that was all anybody got, 'cept me; still, I was leaving end o' month, anyhow, for Mr. Cheiron's—sportsman *he* was—an' my lady'd no call to misname me before folk either.

"But, pipes o' Pan! Mr. Bagshot sent me here to stop pheasants straying into Grimshaw's, an' look at 'em."

On the adjoining stubble some forty birds were idly feeding away from cover. The new keeper, prompt of reed, flirted the first sweet chuckle notes of "Acorn and Mast" (which, if you can but learn it of him, will bring in the most itinerant pheasant), and the leading cocks stood to listen, sumptuous in the sun.

*The Little Pagan Faun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

## THE SAD STORY OF WILLIAM SMAIL

*(A Buckinghamshire Ballad)*

'Twere in the woods o' Bookenhamshire,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,

'Twere in the woods o' Bookenhamshire,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;

Three keepers' housen stood three-square,  
About a mile from each other they were,  
Ordained were they to keep the deer,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

There was three lads o' cunnin' an' skill,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,

There was three lads o' cunnin' an' skill, .  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;

And they swore as how they'd have their will  
Upon the deer in Butson's Hill,  
And as many as e'er they pleased they'd kill,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

The night were dark, the wind were low,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,  
The night were dark, the wind were low,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;  
And these three lads full well did know  
The tracks whereon the deer did go;  
And they made a fat bouck cry "Hullo!"  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

The yongest of them were Bill Smail,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,  
The yongest of them were Bill Smail,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;  
And just as he hopped o'er the pale  
The keeper he cotched 'un without fail,  
And carried 'un off to Bookenham jail,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

Now Sessions was o'er and 'Sizes near,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,  
Now Sessions was o'er and 'Sizes near,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;  
The keepers they did roundly swear  
Bill were the lad as stole the deer.  
Says he, "My Lord, I never were there!"  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

Now William Smail in prison is placed,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,  
Now William Smail in prison is placed,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;  
And there he will not make a feast,  
For bread and water will he taste,  
For a matter o' six months at laste,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

## MORAL

Now there's a moral in this tale,  
Right-fal-ooral-ooral-ee,  
Now there's a moral in this tale,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee;  
The law agin ye will prevail,  
And you'll be cotched like William Smail,  
And carried off to Bookenham jail,  
Right-fal-ooral-ee.

ANON.



# SOME OFF-DAY DOINGS



*And there were present the Picninnies and the Joblillies and the Garyulies.*

SAMUEL FOOTE



## SOME OFF-DAY DOINGS

### *A SHOT AT A SEAL*

WE had to be in Oban by 10 A.M. next morning to meet the *Clydesdale*, and found our new party on board—Lord Kirkaldie and Mr. and Mrs. Barwick Baker. Kirkaldie was very keen to shoot a seal; his valet had volunteered his services as boatman, and I took him with us to the skerries, where I posted the little Lord in his waterproofs, and rowed away to watch the proceedings without frightening the seals from coming ashore. As the tide receded they came in numbers; and great was the excitement of the sporting valet as they neared his master. "A seal is close to his Lordship; his Lordship sees it; his Lordship is about to fire!" till, when the shot was fired, his enthusiasm overpowered all etiquette as he exclaimed with astonished admiration: "I'm d——d if he hasn't hit it!"

*Records of a Quiet Life.* COLONEL C. GREENHILL GARDYNE

### *THE SASSENACH*

The drive from Lairg to Inchnadamff in Assynt was very sultry. Leaning over a rustic bridge, in the heat of the day, was a fat respectable English keeper. He had just arrived, and I thought looked despondingly at the steep frowning hills. Poor fellow! his red face and well-fed contour seemed ill-fitted to contend with more trying ground than the turnip and stubble



fields, of which he was likely musing. Our driver thought the same, for, with an unmistakable sneer, he averred, "He's grand at feeding the dowgs".

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### THE CROSSBILLS

For full an hour afterwards did I keep watch, staring at the opposite path, at first anxiously, then listlessly, in the vain hope of seeing a buck pass, although roused every now and then as the shouts of the drivers occasionally reached my ears, or the tonguing of a hound, gradually approaching but finally passing unseen, like the animal he was chasing, raised my expectations to the utmost for a few moments. At last, becoming resigned to my bad luck, I turned round in my place of concealment and again admired the glimpse of the distant landscape between the taller trees in the opposite direction. The evening was approaching, when suddenly a singular, continuous, shrill chirping sound reached my ears, as of several small birds together, but the notes were strange to me. Although well acquainted with the call of most British birds, I could not recognise this one, and the longer I listened the more I was puzzled. Gradually it approached, and seemed to proceed from one of the taller Scotch firs at a little distance. Fixing my eyes on the spot, I soon saw several little birds, something larger than bullfinches, emerging from the foliage, and, flying one by one towards the tree that was nearest to me, alight on the very boughs that hung over my head. I could hardly believe my eyes, as I realised the delightful fact that I was actually within a few yards of a whole family of crossbills, *loxia curvirostra*, busily engaged at their marvellous employment of splitting the fir-cones and extracting the seeds.

Need I say that the recollection of previous bad luck, and

even my sufferings from the gnats, were obliterated by such an interesting sight, not the less welcome from its being so unexpected. The very plumage of these little creatures added to the charm of their presence. Some were of a beautiful deep crimson colour, others orange or yellow; others, again, were clad in a plain brown livery, and all were busily intent on their occupation of rifling the cones, during which they kept flying about from one twig to another, incessantly uttering their shrill, monotonous notes. After close observation, I noticed that they seldom attempted to operate upon a cone on the exact spot where it grew, but after snapping one off from a slender terminal twig, each bird would hop or fly to the central part of the branch, and in parrot-like fashion hold it in his foot, but more frequently *under* it, as a hawk holds a small bird when in the act of devouring it, and quickly inserting his bill between the scales, split them open by means of that wonderful tool, and extract the seeds with the greatest facility. Occasionally a cone would fall to the ground just as it was snapped off; but, in such a case, a fresh one was instantly selected, no further notice being taken of the one that had dropped. Their powers of climbing appeared fully equal to that of the titmice, as they swung about in all directions and in every imaginable attitude, twisting and twirling, fluttering and chattering, within a few yards of me, and evidently quite unconscious of my presence. This was too good to last. The loud cries of the beaters, now rapidly approaching, had for some time overpowered the notes of the crossbills, and announced that the *chasse* was drawing to a close. Either alarmed at this, or having completed their selection of the most tempting cones in the fir-tree over my head, some of the little birds were evidently preparing for a move, when suddenly a rushing sound behind me recalled me to consciousness, and turning about, I had just time to catch a glimpse of a fine roebuck, with a capital head, dash across the vista within twelve yards of my position. My

rifle, on half-cock, had long reposed in the hollow of my arm, and there it still remained, as useless, under the circumstances, as a walking-stick.

*Autumn on the Spey.* A. E. KNOX

### PTARMIGAN

As the stalker sits disconsolately waiting for the mist to rise, he is often surrounded by the ptarmigan, of whose presence he was probably unaware but a few moments before. Now they appear to be perched on the rocks on all sides of him, and brighten, to a certain extent, the oppressive and deathlike stillness by their harsh though not unpleasant notes. But he sees them not till, perchance, there occurs a sudden rift in the gloom, and the cloak of darkness that has enshrouded him is thrown aside and carried away on the wings of the rising breeze, to reveal in an instant a picture the surpassing loveliness of which seems doubly enhanced by contrast with the mournfulness of his late surroundings. In the immediate foreground flutter the ptarmigan, like little white fairies, over the glistening rocks; whilst on the green slopes are grouped in graceful attitudes the ever-lovely forms of the children of the mist. Fear and beauty seem embodied in their presence as they stand with quivering nostrils and attentive ears gazing earnestly down the precipice towards some distant corrie from whence wells forth the repeated roar of a mighty stag. To complete the vision, a transient shaft of sunlight lights with sudden force the stems of the birches that fringe the loch below, creating a perfected image in the glassy depths beneath. The scene is but a beautiful picture, to disappear as quickly as it came; and landscape, deer, and ptarmigan all fade once more as the shroud of mist envelops the hill.

*Game Birds and Shooting Sketches.* J. G. MILLAIS

*A PEREGRINE*

It was in Scotland, and I'd a rook rifle under my arm. High up came a peregrine carrying a blue rock and being mobbed by daws and other *canaille*. An abominable impulse, for which I apologise, made me point the rifle at her and pull the trigger. The bullet must have startled her for, dropping her quarry, she leapt aloft (like Tom Bowling) and, a further few hundred feet up, there she "waited on". I walked over to see what she'd chosen for dinner, and as I did so I literally stepped into the middle of a covey of partridges, who exploded in all directions, skimming and dodging like so many snipe. Instantly Her Ladyship stooped at them. I heard the roar and swish of her passage, I saw a momentary zigzag of blue-backed lightning, and then up she shot into her clouds again and was gone. She'd missed her stoop, but I'd seen a ferly, indeed.

*The Frequent Gun.* PATRICK R. CHALMERS

*THE FOX*

The first interesting sight in this very interesting day presented itself to us when we got to the edge of the gorge, in the shape of an old dog-fox lying tucked up on a ledge of rock—a sight to gladden the heart of a foxhunter. His lair was in the very face of a precipice, sheer, smooth, and apparently impossible to scale. But a fox always knows exactly what to do. Perhaps a rat is the only other animal who never seems to lose his head in an emergency. How did he get into this place, and how on earth was he going to get out of it? He might, of course, stay where he was and stare us out of countenance: a Master of Foxhounds he had never seen before; but then Duncan and David certainly had a dangerous look about them, so he decided to quit. Running along an invisible ledge, jump-

ing on to a little rock where there was hardly foothold for a mouse, doubling on and off the stump of a tree, he next seemed to hop up a huge boulder, sheer and perpendicular as the side of a house, looking all the time more like what a stage-carpenter would call a "profile" fox cut out of cardboard and suspended by strings to a "backcloth" than the real live beauty that he was. And he was a beauty, and no mistake. There is nothing in the whole animal creation quite so lithe, so supple, so active and yet so strong for his size as the fox. A fox in good condition is the very epitome of fine quality. The colour and texture of his coat, the perfect symmetry of his limbs, his brush with its long white tag, his black velvet ears and grey throat all combine to place him quite at the top of the class.

*The Passing Years.* LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

### THE FOX OF BEN TROVATO

On Reynard came until he was quite close, when I stepped out from behind the stone. His gaze met mine with a savage glare, but quick as the eye can wink I brought the gun to my shoulder, pressed the trigger, and many a bleating mother was avenged. There was no mistake this time, as on dissecting him it was found that his stomach was gorged with blood and mutton, amongst which was a little wool. It was also found that he had lost part of one of his forefeet, having at some time or other had it trapped off, which circumstance no doubt accounted for his extreme wariness. The only pad any of the keepers in the district could remember having been found in a trap was two years before at a spring on the mountain-side sloping towards the River Meig. While angling on that river the head stalker had killed a trout three pounds in weight. On cleaning it he discovered a fox-pad in its stomach. Whether the pad found in the stomach of this trout was the same as that

left in the trap, and belonged to the fox that had just been shot, will never, of course, be known. It is to my mind, however, within the bounds of possibility, that when the keeper reset the trap at the spring, he would throw down the pad, which after a heavy rain might get washed down a burn to the river, and thus find its way into the stomach of the trout. However one may try to account for it, to find the pad of a fox in the stomach of a trout was certainly somewhat curious and unexpected.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### THE OTTER

I had sat in the oak for about half an hour, with my eyes fixed on the stream and my back against the elastic branch by which I was supported, and rocked into a sort of dreamy repose—when I was roused by a flash in the upper pool, a ripple on its surface, and then a running swirl, and something that leaped, and plunged, and disappeared. I watched without motion for some moments, but nothing came up and I began to doubt that it was only one of those large, lazy salmon which neither the wing of peacock, or bird of paradise, or any other delusion in gold or silver can tempt to the surface, but which, after refusing all which art can offer, comes weltering up from the bottom, and throws himself splash over your line! Just as I was thinking how often he had treated me with this impertinence, in that same place I saw two dark objects bobbing like ducks down the rapid between the two pools, but immediately as they came near, distinguished the round, staring, goggle-eyed heads of two otters, floating one after the other, their legs spread out like flying squirrels, and steering with their tails, the tips of which showed above the water like the rudder of an Elbe *scuite*. Down they came as flat as floating skins upon the

water, but their round short heads and black eyes constantly in motion, examining with eager vigilance every neuk and rock which they passed. I looked down into the pool below me—it was clear as amber—and behind a large boulder of granite, in about eight feet of water, I saw three salmon—a large one lying just at the back of the stone, and two smaller holding against the stream in the same line. They lay sluggish and sleepy in the sunshine, without any motion, except the gentle skulling of their tails. The otters were steering down the pool, bobbing and flirting the water with their snouts, and now and then ducking their heads till they came over the stone: in an instant, like a flash of light, the fish were gone, and where the otters had just floated there was nothing but two undulating rings upon the glossy surface. In the next instant there was a rush and swirl in the deep, under the rock on the west side, and a long shooting line going down to the rapid like the ridge which appears above the back fin of a fish in motion. Near the tail of the pool there was another rush and turn, and two long lines of bubbles showed that the otters were returning. Immediately afterwards the large salmon came out of the water with a spring of more than two yards, and just as he re-entered the otter struck him behind the gills and they disappeared together, leaving a star of bright scales upon the surface.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### *THE WATER-SHREW*

As we passed along the bank, a shrew-mouse came out from its little door in the snow, crossed the ice to the water, and dropping into the stream, darted up the current to the throat of the pool, where it fished with great vigilance and velocity, then, suddenly rising to the surface, like a little black cork, ran

along the water like the spider-gnat, climbed the margin of the ice, and sitting on its hind legs, ate what it had caught, wiped its face with much assiduity and again plunged, and repeated its fishing. When it had exhausted the best of one pool, it descended to another, generally rising on the surface and running down with the current, tumbling through the little rapids and rolling over the stones like a tiny black ball. Having entered the new basin, it ran down to about the middle, and, turning sharply, dived against the stream and shot up the water, fishing it with great activity, to the entrance of the throat. We watched it for more than half an hour, at only a few paces, sometimes only a few feet, distant, till the light beginning to fail, it disappeared up the burn.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE WRENS

In Coire a' Ghrunnda this May day, at a height of 1700 feet above sea-level, I passed the nest of a wren. Domed, compactly built, and newly finished, it was placed in a cranny of a great boulder, and I wondered what had induced its owners to set their house thus high.

*The Charm of Skye.* SETON GORDON

### "ANNE OF GEIERSTEIN"

It is a mighty solitude this, just on the watershed of Rannoch. The streams flowing west and north find their way into Loch Linnhe, while those turning eastward go to swell the Tummel and the Tay. But one sees some odd things here occasionally. Early one September morning lately (1896) I was riding along Loch Ossian on my way to the hill where I was to stalk. There



is a shred of old woodland beside that fair lake; the firs have all disappeared, but there remain birch, rowan, and alder along a couple of miles of steep hillside. It was a divine morning; the slanting rays lit up the golden spray of the birches and the intense crimson of the rowan leaves, and through these gleamed the pale azure of the lake. Grouse-cocks crowed crouselly beside the track; the early mists wreathed themselves fantastically around Beinn-na-Lap; it was all so lovely that I could not but loiter, and the old pony picked his way as he pleased along the rough path. But my reverie was roughly broken by a violent shy on the part of the usually sedate animal. He might well be surprised. Lying beside the path, under the steep bank, was a tramp in a drunken sleep. Not considering myself under any obligation to disturb him, I gathered up my reins and passed on, as heartlessly as any Levite, speculating how the devil had managed to put whisky in this poor waif's way in that wilderness, the nearest public-house being at Rannoch Station, fully ten rough miles away. Somehow that tramp dwelt a good deal in my thoughts. He had a peculiarly long nose of intense fiery red; he was pretty comfortably dressed and there was the painful contrast between his unlovely condition and the pure morning scenery. Moreover, I noticed as I shuffled past that a book lay on the wet earth under his elbow.

When I returned that way at nightfall, the tramp had moved on, but he had left his book behind him. It was *Anne of Geierstein*.

*Memories of the Month.* SIR HERBERT MAXWELL

### THE SCARECROW

In walking up the steep brae near Loch Layghal, we were admiring the most natural scarecrow that ever defended a corn or potato field. It had two leaning staffs, a tattered hat, ragged coat and trousers and a most imposing still-life attitude. "How

natural!" I muttered to myself. Ross's ear was quick, "Oh, sir, you'd be astonished to see some of them here. They make them far more nat'ral than that." Scarcely was this unlucky assertion hazarded, when the scarecrow, which, like the Irish recruit, no doubt "stood up in the centre of its best wardrobe", began to walk. Ross looked extremely queer, and we moved quicker on.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### THE RAVENS

There is something romantically appropriate in the hoarse croak and the uncanny antics of a lonely pair of these demon-like birds in the recesses of some sombre glen that is seldom illuminated by the sunbeams.

*Mountain Stream and Covert.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### THE ANGEL HENS

We muster'd out all in good trim,  
Out o'er Ben'brotney for to clim',  
The mount was steep and twa miles high,  
Up towering thro' the clouds and sky,  
But there we found the angel hens,  
The bonny milk white 'tarmigans,  
And did regret how few we got,  
They would not let's within a shot,  
Four of us fired altogether,  
But did not take from them one feather.

*Instructions for Hunting.* JAMES CHRISTIE, GAMEKEEPER (1817)

### THE SALMON FISHER

The late Mr. Russell of *The Scotsman* said that "the thrill of joy, fear, and surprise induced by the first tug of a salmon is the most exquisite sensation of which this mortal frame is susceptible". That sensation would require a pen more gifted than mine adequately to describe. I once heard a lady make the attempt. She stated the sensation that flashed through her frame along the line from the fish far out in the depths was somewhat akin to the thrill that passed through her soul when her lips were pressed with the first kiss of love.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### THE BUZZARDS

It is strange how a pair of buzzards will come year after year to nest in the same rock, even though annually destroyed. For thirty years a pair have nested in a rock in Mull, and in all that time not one single bird was allowed to escape the vigilance of the keeper, and still they come. To human eyes the rock does not seem a better nesting-place than many others, but whether it is a nesting-place congenial to buzzards' eyes, or whether their ancestors have nested there and it is in accordance with the law of heredity, we can only speculate.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### THE COMMON GUILLEMOT

Common Guillemot. *Uria troile*. (Linn.)

Common, especially in the southern islands. Its cry exactly resembles (so I am told) that of a girl when tickled.

*Wild Sport in the Outer Hebrides. (Appendix.)* C. V. A. PEEL

### THE HIGHLAND WILD CAT

Many striped grey cats of large size have come under my observation, but there was no more difficulty in deciding that they belonged to the domestic breed than if they had been tortoise-shell coloured tabbies. On the other hand, members of the wild species are quite as easily recognised. Characteristics such as their uniformity in colour; the dense tail without taper, black at the end and ringed alternately with black and grey; the beautiful, long, soft fur, warmed with russet inside the flanks; the large size, the strong muscles, the broad skull, the formidable teeth and claws, and the round cream-coloured spot on the breast, varying in size from a shilling to a florin—all these mark them as representatives of the true species of *Felis catus*. Their cry also is different from that of the domestic cat. I can remember many years ago sitting all night at a cairn in which was a fox den, waiting for the first streak of daylight in order to try and shoot the old foxes at Crag-an-graghag, opposite Corrie Charaby, in Glen Orrin in Ross-shire. Never can I forget the cries of a pair of wild cats, somewhat resembling those indescribable noises that in town render night hideous to human beings, but of a much louder and deeper tone. The wild, weird, unearthly cries as they answered each other in the quiet of the night, echoing from the opposite side of the glen, almost filled me with a feeling of awe.

*The Natural History of Sport in the Highlands.* TOM SPEEDY

### THE PIKE AT PATT

The trout fishing was first-rate; they were the best trout I ever tasted, as pink and firm as a salmon, and whether for size, beauty, numbers, or flavour, I have never seen them equalled in any water in Scotland. They often ran  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. to 2 lbs., and

one was killed on a fly, in the stream running from the Ged Lochs to the Monar, over 3 lbs. There were a good many large pike, and they also were as pink and firm as the trout, and it might be said of them as used to be said of the English in Ireland, after the second or third generation, that these became *Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores*, so these pike were pinker in flesh and more trouty in flavour than the trout themselves. I hate a pike generally, but these were excellent, and having only trout to feed on they had become the essence of trout.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### “YE BANKS AND BRAES”

Once I arrived at Salen Inn on the day of the cattle market. The only room vacant was a closet off the crowded public room; you could poke the fire and open the window from the bed; and hear all the talk next door. The little maid brought me a large basin of broth and a junk of bread for my dinner, and saying: “I like you very mich!” closed the door, when I heard her tell the drovers not to make so much noise, as there was a gentleman there. They took it ill, said they had a right to do as they liked, the room was public, etc. etc. So I looked out of my den, saying I entirely agreed with them; that I would be sorry to interfere where they had as good a right as I had. Some knew me, and I heard: “Gosh, gosh, it’s the Cornal of Glenforsa!” “I did not know who was in it,” said one. “Excuse us, sir,” said another. “Will you not taste with us?” I went and shook hands with some, and begged they would not allow me to be a “spoil-sport”; retiring soon to my couch, but not to sleep! The conversation was of stots and stirks and ponies; then came Gaelic songs. The company included, besides the local farmers and drovers, a Lowland drover who knew not Gaelic, and a commercial traveller from Glasgow, a High-

lander, who knew both languages, and posed as a man of the world. Mr. Dodds, the Lowlander, in his cups, offered to sing an English song, the offer being received with cheers. He started, hoarsely, in a long-drawn twang: "Ye banks an' braes o' bonnie Doon", broke down at end of the first line; was cheered; began again; cheered again several times, being always encouraged to try again; "Ye'll get it yet, Mr. Dodds"; and was flattered as to his voice by the polite but laughing Highlanders, till he gave it up and called for more whisky!

*Records of a Quiet Life.* COLONEL C. GREENHILL GARDYNE

### THE PROMPTITUDE OF GENIUS

It was Theodore Hook, we think, who was engaged to dine with a friend, when, looking down through the area railings next door, he saw a glorious haunch revolving on the spit. With the promptitude of genius, his resolution was taken. He happened to have a slight acquaintance with that neighbour: he knocked, walked upstairs, palmed off one of his plausible stories and was duly invited to stay to dinner. The expected haunch never made its appearance. Queries were insinuated and explanations ensued. The host's friend in No. 99 had a party that evening, and his own kitchen range being out of repair, he had sent in that noble haunch to be roasted.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND



# WHERE DOCTORS DISAGREE

*There's just a waukrif' twa or three  
Thrawn commentantors sweer to 'gree.*

R. L. STEVENSON





# WHERE DOCTORS DISAGREE

## *GUN VERSUS RIFLE*

I HAVE shot grouse over dogs for half an hour with deer looking on and apparently enjoying the sport within half a mile. Of course they move off eventually, but they do so in a very different way, and go a very much shorter distance, than they would if the cause of the disturbance had been the head of a man appearing on a knoll a hundred yards off.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

## *GUN VERSUS RIFLE*

A good many years ago I was with a sportsman whom no amount of experience seemed capable of teaching. On a certain day he would decide to shoot grouse on forest ground, and no matter how favourable conditions were for stalking, or how likely deer were to be where he was going, he would adhere to his original intention. When he saw the deer on the ground he seemed to have regrets: but always he continued shooting, after remarking, "We'll be after those devils tomorrow". And almost certainly we were, only to find there were no deer there for us. The gentleman in question rented this ground for many years and always pursued the same tactics.

*Days on the Hill.* "AN OLD STALKER"

### THE TARGET

Having once become a fair shot at the target, I would advise no one to continue the practice. It is apt to make one slow and indecisive.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE TARGET

All the years I have been deer-stalking, throughout the whole season I have gone regularly to the target, holding that no amount of trouble is too great which may help to fewer wounded stags, fewer misses, and fewer disappointments to the stalkers and oneself.

*The High Tops of Black Mount.* THE MARCHIONESS OF BREADALBANE

### THE DRIVE

There are few more beautiful sights than a herd of stags moving up a hillside or over a sky-line, and no more exciting moment than that when they approach the point where a decision must be made by their leaders as to the course which it is deemed safest to take. Such a point there must be in every deer drive. It may be on a ridge or at the bottom of a glen, in the middle of the burn running out of a corrie, or on the shoulder dividing one corrie from another.

Enjoying some such freedom of action, deer in a modern drive seem to be given a better chance for their lives than is the case in stalking, or even in the pursuit of any other wild animal so far as I know. Therein consists more than half the pleasure and the whole excitement of the sport. Anyone, even he who has never before witnessed a drive, can see it for himself and understand the situation. He observes the herd come

over the sky-line, a forest of horns; they do not dwell there long, but descend the slope, stopping perhaps for a while on the shoulder between two corries. Our imaginary sportsman may be posted within a rifle shot of the burn at the bottom, or some way up the brae face on the side of the glen opposite to where the herd are now standing, with their heads turning in every direction.

So he waits on, confident that, should they cross, though he may not be the favoured sportsman, the deer he sees cantering straight towards the line of guns must come within range of two at least, if not three of the party, pleased for the sake of his host that the drive is going to be a success, determined if needs be to rest satisfied with the enjoyment which he has already derived from scenes of forest life.

In such a position as I have imagined in three out of four cases all goes well. The herd cross the burn and go right through the line of guns. But sometimes, from a single act of carelessness or from an unforeseen accident, and often for no accountable reason, at this last supreme moment the drive is a failure. The herd of deer come down to the burn, but do not cross it. They stand on the brink and again seem to take counsel. They look long and steadily in front of them and then—ominous sign!—turn their heads and look upwards, the way they have come, for a short time; next they turn their heads half round and gaze steadily over their right and left shoulder. You pull out your glass to try to find out what they are staring at, but you see nothing, nor do the deer—that is the worst part of it. Then perhaps one or two begin to pick up the sweet grass on the bank of the burn while the rest turn round and round, the leaders of the herd still staring in the same direction, though their bodies may for the sake of comfort have changed position. All of a sudden, in the twinkling of an eye, without any apparent reason, up go all their heads together, each deer looking in the direction he happened to be facing, in another second

the leaders trot off in the direction in which they were so earnestly gazing; "that trot becomes a gallop soon", and there is an end of the drive and a bitter disappointment to everyone engaged in it. The herd will probably be met by one or two of the drivers, but no power on earth will now turn them. They have chosen their road and intend to stick to it.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### THE DRIVE

As to driving large herds of deer to passes, it is very injurious to a forest. In my humble opinion, it is a most Cockney, unsportsmanlike proceeding, and reduces the noble sport of deer-stalking to a level with a "battue" of pheasants and hares.

Horatio Ross's Introduction to  
*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

### DOGS

I have not taken a dog out deer-stalking for five-and-twenty years at least, nor have I allowed one to be used by any of my friends who have visited me. I grant that occasionally a deer has been recovered by dogs which might have escaped; but the mischief they do in a forest is quite heart-breaking. Far better watch the wounded deer; and in nine cases out of ten he will stop before going very far, when a fresh stalk will generally allow the stalker to get a second shot.

Horatio Ross's Introduction to  
*A Handbook of Deer-Stalking.* ALEXANDER MACRAE

### DOGS

The only objection that is raised against the use of dogs in a forest is that it causes such disturbance to the ground! Why, a



THE CLIFF



dog that had never seen a deer, borrowed for the day from the neighbouring shepherd, would soon put a three-legged stag, if alone, into the nearest burn and enable you to do *something* to secure him, so whatever disturbance there might be would be confined to quite a limited extent of ground.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### LONE HAND

The sportsman who stalks "on his own" has, in the language of Scrope, "a proper perception of the sport", and will reap such abundant reward from the thrilling excitement of his approach that quite a small beast at the end of it will cause him inexpressible joy. The trophy is an incident, and all that matters is the stalk. Not for him are the pampered mongrels of the straths, but rather the mist-born children of the stony tops—small weights, slim heads, lithe bodies, clever as cats, footed like goats, wild as the wind, and fit to test his quality as a stalker to the uttermost.

*All by yourself*—try the recipe upon a hill stag, and you will remain a deer-stalker for life.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### LONE HAND

I have tried stalking for myself, and in spite of knowing my own ground thoroughly and having specially good eyesight, experience leads me to prefer the usual method. I am not ashamed to confess that I like the presence of my stalker for the sake of his company. To spend the whole day on the hill, to witness the various incidents of the sport or the phenomena of nature without anyone to share the interest involved in all that goes on, deprives me of half the enjoyment. True you have



the gillie, but he is probably young and shy, and cannot be got to talk, while his conversation would likely not be interesting. Your stalker, on the other hand, is often more amusing than a professional dining-out wit.

*Fur and Feather Series.* CAMERON OF LOCHIEL

### A PET STAG

Hill stags never become tame in the ordinary sense of the word; though losing fear, they never acquire affection, and sooner or later invariably become murderous.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

### A PET STAG

The extreme caution of wild deer does not hinder them from becoming tame and confiding pets, provided that they are reared in confinement from an early age. It is very charming to see a young Scotch stag canter up to the windows of a lodge, to beg for an offering of oatcake.

*Fur and Feather Series.* THE REV. H. A. MACPHERSON

### TWIN CALVES

Twin calves are generally considered very unusual, but they are reported to occur every year in Martindale. They have been known to occur on Dartmoor.

*Fur and Feather Series.* THE REV. H. A. MACPHERSON

### TWIN CALVES

I have more than once seen references in the Press to twin deer calves. During the whole of my experience in the deer

forest I have never known one case, and I am inclined to think that such statements are due to a very easily made mistake. Often have I seen the calf of one season and the calf of the preceding season suckling at one and the same time. A superficial observer would at once put down the calves as twins. The hind will allow the calf to suckle at any time, but should the year-old approach her alone with any such intent she immediately drives it off. It is only when the calf is suckling that the year-old is allowed to do so. I suppose the hind realises she cannot drive off one without driving off both, and this maternal solicitude for her latest progeny prevents her doing so. Some year-olds seem to realise this and take full advantage of their knowledge. The habit is not a very common one, and is probably confined to the latest calves of the preceding season.

*Days on the Hill.* "AN OLD STALKER"

### "WAIT TILL HE RISES!"

Do not fire at a stag *lying down*; it is a much worse chance than you think, unless you can be pretty sure of yourself and fire at his neck; for when lying he seldom shows you any mortal part of his body to aim at, and is lying all sideways and nohow, and very little of him is really at a proper angle to the flight of your bullet. I suspect more stags are missed by this shot than any other.

*Deer-Stalking.* H. H. CREALOCK

### "WAIT TILL HE RISES!"

The traditional remark, "wait till he rises", is better ignored. A stag may lie in such a way as to offer a good broadside shot, and you can make more certain of him by taking a steady shot when you are ready than by waiting an indefinite time, getting

cold and perhaps "stag fever", and then seeing him rise when you least expect it and speed away with his tail towards you.

*Practical Rifle Shooting.* WALTER WINANS

### "WAIT TILL HE RISES!"

*(A Solution)*

"Shall I take him lying?" I think it is a question which the individual must decide for himself from a knowledge of his own temperament. Some men can sit and wait comfortably, or uncomfortably, as the nature of the ground permits, for an hour or more till their beast rises, and then kill him with the utmost sang-froid. Others would miss to a certainty if they waited; whilst if they took him lying as soon as they recovered their wind, the result would probably be a bull's eye. Therefore, when stalking alone, my advice is, "Use your own judgment". A stag's neck when he is lying down at one hundred yards distant is not a good mark, but at the same time, if he has a really good head, you may be so jumpy by the time he rises that your bullet will hum sweetly over or under him. In either case, if you miss him you will be certain to blame yourself for not having chosen the alternative. If you do fire when he is lying, aim at the neck, as in that case you will kill him clean without making a mess of the venison, or miss him clean. In the latter event, with any luck you will get a second chance when he rises.

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE AGE OF A DEER

In the year 1826, the late Glengarry, accompanied by Lord Fincastle, now Earl of Dunmore, was hunting in the Garth of Glengarry; the beaters had been sent into a wood, called Tor-

na-carry; a fine stag soon broke forth, and was going straight to Lord Fincastle, but owing to a slight swell, or change of the current of air, he turned towards Glengarry, who fired at, and killed him.

On going up to him a mark was discovered on his left ear; the first man who arrived was asked, "What mark it was?" He replied, "That it was the mark of Ewen-mac-Jan Og". Five others gave the same answer; and after consulting together, all agreed that Ewen-mac-Jan Og had been dead 150 years, and for thirty years before his death had marked all the calves he could catch with this particular mark; so that this deer (allowing the mark to have been authentic) must have been 150 years old, and might have been 180. The horns, which are preserved by the present Glengarry, are not particularly large, but have a very wide spread.

Now this circumstance is clearly and honourably attested and it was communicated to me both by the late and present Glengarry.

A very large stag was known for 200 years in the Monalia, a range of mountains lying between Badenoch and Inverness. He was always seen alone, keeping the open plains, so that he was unapproachable. He was easily distinguished from all others by his immense proportions.

About the year 1777, Angus Macdonald, after stalking for five hours, got within shot of Damh-mor-a-Vonalia, as he was called (that is, the large stag of Monalia); he fired, and saw distinctly with his glass that the ball had entered his left shoulder blade. He fell to the shot, but, not being severely injured, recovered, and got away.

Macdonald soon made known that he had wounded the Damh-mor, but there was some scepticism on the subject. In 1807, thirty years after this occurrence, the Damh-mor was shot four miles to the westward of the inn at Garviemore, at the head of Badenoch. Thus it was:

John Macdonald (innkeeper there, and brother to Angus, who wounded the deer as above), having heard that the hart was seen in his country, went in quest of him; and after stalking nearly a whole day in August, got within distance, and brought him down. After a minute examination, the ball of 1777 was found in the left shoulder, an inch under the skin, which still retained the mark of an old-standing perforation. The horns were by no means remarkable in point of size; but that on the left, being the side on which the deer was wounded, was ill-shaped and defective.

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### THE AGE OF A DEER

A deer thirty years of age would, in my opinion, be a very old beast, and it is pretty safe to say there is not a beast in Scotland at the present time which can claim so long a life. Mr. M'Connochie mentions a hind at Guisachan which died of old age when twenty-nine. "Her head had become quite white and her neck quite stiff—she could not look backwards without turning the whole body."

*Hunting and Stalking the Deer.* EDWARDS AND WALLACE

### THE LAST WOLF

While the system of thirlage was in its zenith, and no better plan thought of, a servant girl was one day sent to the mill of Glascorry to sift a *melder*, or grinding of corn. The melder being large, she had a long and hard day's work and was so overpowered by fatigue, that on her way home she lay down on a bank to rest herself and fell asleep. She rested soundly until daybreak, when, to her surprise and horror, she found a huge shaggy wolf lying on part of her garment; but, with great

presence of mind, she succeeded in quietly extricating herself, and stealthily fled home. On relating her adventure, the alarmed neighbourhood went in pursuit of the wolf, whose life had been long sought after because of the havoc he had made among the flocks in all parts of the glen. He had left the place where the girl saw him, and the part of her apparel which she had left, and on which he had wreaked his vengeance, was found torn to shreds; but chase being given, he was discovered on the West Shank of Wirran, and almost instantaneously shot by, it is said, Robertson of Nathro. This was the last wolf seen in Scotland; and, whether in imitation of the usual love story, or from fact, it is also told that the young laird of Nathro led the poor melder-sifter to the hymeneal altar!

*The Land of the Lindsays.* ANDREW JERVISE

### THE LAST WOLF

The last of their race was killed by MacQueen of Pall-a'-chrocain, who died in the year 1797, and was the most celebrated "carnach" of the Findhorn for an unknown period. Of a gigantic stature, 6 feet 7 inches in height, he was equally remarkable for his strength, courage, and celebrity as a deer-stalker. It will not be doubted that he had the best "long-dogs" or deer greyhounds in the country; and for their service and his own, one winter's day, about the year before mentioned, he received a message from the Laird of MacIntosh, that a large "black beast", supposed to be a wolf, had appeared in the glens, and the day before killed two children who, with their mother, were crossing the hills from Calder, in consequence of which, a "Tainchel", or gathering to drive the country, was called to meet at a tryst above Fi-Giuthas, where MacQueen was invited to attend with his dogs.

Pall-a'-chrocain informed himself of the place where the

children had been killed—the last tracks of the wolf, and the conjectures of his haunt, and promised his assistance.

In the morning the Tainchel had long assembled, and MacIntosh waited with impatience, but MacQueen did not arrive; his dogs and himself were, however, auxiliaries too important to be left behind, and they continued to wait until the best of a hunter's morning was gone, when at last he appeared, and MacIntosh received him with an irritable expression of disappointment.

"*Ciod e a' chabhag?*"—"What was the hurry?"—said Pall-a'-chrocain.

MacIntosh gave an indignant retort, and all present made some impatient reply.

MacQueen lifted his plaid—and drew the black bloody head of the wolf from under his arm—"Sin e dhuibh!"—"There it is for you!"—said he, and tossed it on the grass in the midst of the surprised circle.

MacIntosh expressed great joy and admiration, "and gave him the land called Sean-achan for meat to his dogs".

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

## SHEEP

We are apt to forget that the golden age of hill-stalking is intertwined like a double thread with the golden age of sheep-farming. The splendid stags and hinds that dazzled and charmed the fashionable world in Landseer's famous pictures were bred on sheep ground. Charles St. John habitually stalked on sheep ground, and the "Muckle Hart of Benmore" was a sheep-ground stag.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

*SHEEP*

Sheep are the greatest enemies to deer, by diminishing their already restricted haunts, disturbing their repose, and deteriorating their best pastures. For all these causes the gallant natives of the hill detest the sordid and encroaching intruders, and will not inhabit the same ground as large flocks. A remarkable instance of this antipathy was observed in the end of the last century by an old drover when crossing one of the great moors in Sutherland, soon after the first "head" of sheep had been introduced into Lord Reay's country. The narrator was surprised by the appearance of a large column of nearly a thousand deer passing out of the country in a steady and determined emigration. Disgusted by the invasion of sheep and dogs, they had collected from all parts, and unable to find clean ground, continued their march to the west, dispersing into the most solitary glens, from whence they never returned. This determined abhorrence to sheep does not arise merely from the disturbance of their collies. The deer are very delicate in their food, and exceedingly fastidious in the purity of their pasture; independent, therefore, of the severe diminution of their best provision caused by the close feeding of the sheep, they cannot endure the oily rancour of their wool, and the additional abomination of its tar and butter. From the absence of these disgusting concomitants they exhibit no antipathy to black cattle, but will herd with them in perfect harmony.

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIESKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART



## IN GLENDOCHART

*(The Rake's Progress)*

A melancholy race was run by a Highland chieftain. He was what is called "a favourite of fortune". With excellent talents, and heir to grand sporting estates, he had also wonderful aptitude for all manly recreations, and was considered an expert in most of them. The northern summer and autumn sporting season, with its grouse, salmon, and deer, was his heart's delight; while the hunting-field in the "Shires" supplied uninterrupted winter excitement. On a Twelfth of August he sometimes never went to bed at all, in order to be on the ground by the first streak of the dawn; and in winter never missed "a meet" if he could help it. The natural consequence followed: active sports palled—he took to gambling and horse-racing to supply their place—was completely ruined, and died in his prime, a confirmed sot.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

## IN GLENDOCHART

*(Don Malloch)*

Ah, a man feels young in Glendochart even at the age of ninety. If you will but live your life out of doors in this envied valley, fishing-rod in hand in summer, and gun or curling-stone in winter, you can put behind you all fear of ill-health or old age and even, if so inclined, like the sturdy and ancient Don Malloch, drink whisky with impunity every day and all day long.

*Angling and Art in Scotland.* E. E. BRIGGS

# THE KITCHEN

*Rise, Peter; kill and eat.*

THE ACTS

*Those unctuous morsels of deer's flesh were not made to be received with dispassionate services. I hate a man who swallows them affecting not to know what he is eating. I suspect his taste in higher matters.*

CHARLES LAMB



# THE KITCHEN

## *THE ABBOT'S VENISON*

So please your Holiness and Lordship, he is a son of the woman of the house, who hath shot it and sent it in—killed but now; yet as the animal heat hath not left the body, the kitchener undertakes it shall eat as tender as a young chicken—and this youth hath a special gift in shooting deer and never misses the heart or the brain, so that the blood is not driven through the flesh, as happens too often with us. It is a hart of grease—your Holiness has seldom seen such a haunch.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

## *“THE MOUNTAIN SHEEP ARE SWEETER”*

High ground in summer gives the sweetest pickings, and stags that dwell habitually among the stony tops make incomparably the best venison.

*The Wild Red Deer of Scotland.* ALLAN GORDON CAMERON

## *THE HAUNCH OF VENISON*

*(A poetical epistle to Lord Clare)*

Thanks, my Lord, for your Ven'son; for finer or fatter  
Ne'er ranged in a forest, or smoked in a platter.

The haunch was a picture for painters to study,  
The fat was so white, and the lean was so ruddy;  
Though my stomach was sharp, I could scarce help regretting  
To spoil such a delicate picture by eating;  
I had thoughts in my chamber to place it in view,  
To be shown to my friends as a piece of vertu;  
As in some Irish houses, where things are so-so,  
One gammon of bacon hangs up for the show;  
But, for eating a rasher of what they take pride in,  
They'd as soon think of eating the pan it is fried in.  
But hold—let me pause—Don't I hear you pronounce  
This tale of the bacon's a damnable bounce?  
Well! suppose it a bounce—sure a poet may try,  
By a bounce now and then, to get courage to fly.  
But, my lord, it's no bounce; I protest in my turn,  
It's a truth—and your Lordship may ask Mr. Burn.<sup>1</sup>

To go on with my tale—as I gaze on the Haunch,  
I thought of a friend that was trusty and staunch,  
So I cut it, and sent it to Reynolds undrest,  
To paint it, or eat it, just as he liked best.  
Of the neck and the breast I had next to dispose—  
'Twas a neck and a breast that might rival Monroe's;  
But in parting with these I was puzzled again,  
With the how, and the who, and the where, and the when.  
There's H—d, and C—y, and H—rth, and H—ff,  
I think they love ven'son—I know they love beef;  
There's my countryman, Higgins—Oh! let him alone  
For making a blunder, or picking a bone.  
But, hang it! to poets, who seldom can eat,  
Your very good mutton's a very good treat;  
Such dainties to them their health it might hurt;  
It's like sending them ruffles, when wanting a shirt.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Clare's nephew.

While this I debated, in reverie centred,  
An acquaintance, a friend as he call'd himself, enter'd;  
An under-bred, fine-spoken fellow was he,  
And he smiled as he look'd at the Ven'son and me.  
"What have we got here? Why, this is good eating!  
Your own, I suppose—or is it in waiting?"  
"Why, whose should it be?" cried I, with a flounce,  
"I get these things often"—but that was a bounce:  
"Some lords, my acquaintance, that settle the nation,  
Are pleased to be kind—but I hate ostentation."

"If that be the case then," cried he, very gay,  
"I'm glad I have taken this house in my way.  
To-morrow you take a poor dinner with me;  
No words—I insist on't—precisely at three;  
We'll have Johnson and Burke; all the wits will be there;  
My acquaintance is slight, or I'd ask my Lord Clare.  
And, now that I think on't, as I am a sinner!  
We wanted this Ven'son to make out a dinner.  
What say you—a pasty?—it shall, and it must,  
And my wife, little Kitty, is famous for crust.  
Here, porter!—this Ven'son with me to Mile-end;  
No stirring, I beg—my dear friend—my dear friend!"  
Thus, snatching his hat, he brush'd off like the wind,  
And the porter and eatables follow'd behind.

Left alone to reflect, having emptied my shelf,  
And "nobody with me at sea but myself",  
Though I could not help thinking my gentleman hasty,  
Yet Johnson, and Burke, and a good Ven'son pasty,  
Were things that I never disliked in my life,  
Though clogged with a coxcomb, and Kitty his wife.  
So next day, in due splendour to make my approach,  
I drove to his door in my own hackney-coach.

When come to the place where we all were to dine,  
(A chair-lumber'd closet, just twelve feet by nine),  
My friend bade me welcome, but struck me quite dumb  
With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come!  
"For I knew it," he cried, "both eternally fail,  
The one with his speeches, and t'other with Thrale;  
But no matter, I'll warrant we'll make up the party  
With two full as clever, and ten times as hearty.  
The one is a Scotchman, the other a Jew,  
They're both of them merry, and authors like you.  
The one writes the 'Snarler', the other the 'Scourge':  
Some think he writes 'Cinna'—he owns to 'Panurge'.  
While thus he described them by trade and by name,  
They enter'd, and dinner was served as they came.

At the top a fried liver and bacon were seen,  
At the bottom was tripe in a swingeing tureen;  
At the sides there was spinach and pudding made hot;  
In the middle a place where the Pasty—was not.  
Now, my Lord, as for tripe, it's my utter aversion,  
And your bacon I hate like a Turk or a Persian;  
So there I sat stuck like a horse in a pound,  
While the bacon and liver went merrily round:  
But what vex'd me most was that d——d Scottish rogue,  
With his long-winded speeches, his smiles and his brogue;  
And, "Madam," quoth he, "may this bit be my poison,  
A prettier dinner I never set eyes on!  
Pray, a slice of your liver, though, may I be curst,  
But I've eat of your tripe till I'm ready to burst."  
"The tripe!" quoth the Jew, with his chocolate cheek,  
"I could dine on this tripe seven days in a week;  
I like these here dinners, so pretty and small;  
But your friend there, the Doctor, eats nothing at all."  
"O—ho!" quoth my friend, "he'll come on in a trice,

He's keeping a corner for something that's nice;  
There's a Pasty"—"A Pasty!" repeated the Jew,  
"I don't care if I keep a corner for't too."  
"What the de'il, mon, a Pasty!" re-echoed the Scot,  
"Though splitting, I'll still keep a corner for that."  
"We'll all keep a corner," the lady cried out;  
"We'll all keep a corner," was echoed about.  
While thus we resolved, and the Pasty delay'd,  
With looks that quite petrified enter'd the maid;  
A visage so sad, and so pale with affright,  
Waked Priam in drawing his curtains by night.  
But we quickly found out—for who could mistake her:  
That she came with some terrible news from the baker:  
And so it fell out; for that negligent sloven  
Had shut out the Pasty on shutting his oven.  
Sad Philomel thus—but let similes drop—  
And, now that I think on't, the story may stop.

To be plain, my good Lord, it's but labour misplaced,  
To send such good verses to one of your taste:  
You've got an odd something—a kind of discerning—  
A relish—a taste—sicken'd over by learning;  
At least, it's your temper, as very well known,  
That you think very slightly of all that's your own:  
So, perhaps, in your habits of thinking amiss,  
You may make a mistake, and think slightly of this.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

### *FROM LARDER TO TABLE*

By a beneficent arrangement of Providence, venison may be kept with due care for a fortnight or even three weeks. When it has been hung in the larder the precautions are simple, though



close attention is needful. Cut out the pipe running along the backbone, which is likely to taint, and wipe away the mould which gathers on the surface and in the folds of the meat. You may dust from time to time with flour or pepper or pounded ginger. When the haunch is to be dressed, sponge the surface with lukewarm water, and rub it with butter and lard. Cover with sheets of paper, well buttered or steeped in salad oil, and over that lay a paste of flour and water half an inch thick. Swathe with strong paper again, secure with greased string, and drench the whole in melted butter to prevent the paper from catching fire. Half an hour before it ought to be done, remove the swathings and test with a skewer. Then baste every few minutes with claret and butter. Celerity in sending from the fire to the table is everything, and the brown gravy poured over the meat should be as hot as the dish on which it is served.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### CARVING THE HAUNCH

Incisions should be made longitudinally and crossways, the slices should be somewhat thin and cut lengthways, the more delicate lying to the left, when the joint is turned endways to the carver.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### SERVING THE VENISON

Serving the venison is a matter of no little consequence, for the fat has the unfortunate defect of congealing with extraordinary celerity. As a rule, eating off gold or silver plate is one of the penalties of ostentatious magnificence, with which the gourmand would willingly dispense. There must always be an unpleasant *arrière-pensée* of plate-powder lurking in the

chasings and stray corners. But with venison, in a small and select company, silver, or the humbler pewter, with spirit lamps beneath, may be used with great advantage. Always sensitive to the fleeting nature of earthly pleasures, the bitter lesson is never more forcibly brought home to the epicure than when the venison fat and gravy are congealing visibly on china before his eyes. The evanescent joy eludes him unless he bolt the delicacies American fashion, which is fatal to his hopes, obnoxious to his principles, and attended by indigestion, dyspepsia and remorse.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### THE LOVE-MATCH

We have said our say elsewhere against the practice of mixing wines at dinner, and serving various vintages, however rich and rare, with the several courses. We said it was a sound rule to stick to champagne, nor have we anything to retract. But no rule is without its exceptions, and we are bound to admit an exception in the case of venison. For with venison Burgundy goes as naturally as iced punch with the turtle, and with far more obvious reason. The bouquet of the one and the savour of the other were evidently predestined to make a happy love-match.

*Fur and Feather Series.* ALEXANDER INNES SHAND

### HOW TO PACK VENISON

Haunches should not be packed until they have hung a few days, and the fat has become well "set". A deal-box is the best thing to pack them in—baskets are apt to let the flies pass in, and the rain also, whereas a good made box, well nailed down, does neither the one or the other. Stout canvas or matting is

also used by some, and given fine weather it is as good as box or basket. Should, however, the haunch have to go many miles by mail-cart on a wet day, both this method of packing and the basket trick are certain to result in disappointment to the recipient: for meat that gets damp and wet, turns musty and mouldy by the time it arrives at the end of a thirty hours' journey, and then, if the cook be not very careful to pare off all the musty parts, before putting it to the fire, the whole joint will have a tainted, unpalatable, and perhaps downright unpleasant flavour. Whichever method of packing be chosen, the haunch should be nicely trimmed and floured, and if packed in canvas it should be wrapped in clean paper before sewing up.

*Deer-Stalking.* AUGUSTUS GRIMBLE

### ATHOLE BROSE

Willie an' I cam' doun by Blair  
And in by Tullibardine,  
The Rye were at the waterside;  
An' bee-skeps in the garden;  
I saw the reek of a private still—  
Says I, "Gud Lord, I thank ye!"  
As Willie and I cam' in by Blair  
And out by Killiecrankie.

Ye hinny bees, ye smuggler lads,  
Thou, Muse, the bard's protector,  
I never kent what Rye was for  
Till I had drunk the nectar!  
And shall I never drink it mair?  
Gud troth, I beg your pardon!  
The neist time I come doun by Blair  
And in by Tullibardine.

R. L. STEVENSON

## SIR WALTER'S THANKS

I have now lying before me a letter from Sir Walter Scott, to whom I was in the habit of sending Highland venison (and who was no mean judge of the merits of a *plat de resistance*), attesting its excellence. Thus I quote from it, word for word:

"Thanks, dear Sir, for your venison, for finer or fatter  
Never roam'd in a forest, or smoked in a platter.

"Your superb haunch arrived in excellent time to feast a new married couple, the Douglasses, of M——, and was pronounced by far the finest that could by possibility have been seen in Teviotdale since Chevy Chase. I did not venture on the carving, being warned both by your hints, and the example of old Robert Sinclair, who used to say that he had thirty friends during a fortnight's residence at Harrowgate, and lost them all in the carving of one haunch of venison; so I put Lockhart on the duty, and, as the haunch was too large to require strict economy, he hacked and hewed it well enough."

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

## ROE VENISON

"The roe, Captain Waverley, may be hunted at all times alike; for never being in what is called pride of grease, he is also never out of season, though it be a truth that his venison is not equal to that of either the red or fallow deer." Such is the stately Baron of Bradwardine's verdict on roes and their venison. And who would deny the conclusion when arrived at from such premises? If the roe is "never out of season", and "may be hunted at all times", and is never "in pride of grease", I fully agree with the Baron that the vile trash which he calls "venison" is only fit for a dog-kennel. But then the "if"—

there's the rub. I dispute his premises *in toto*, and therefore deny his conclusion. The roe may *not* be hunted at all times alike. The roe *is* out of season the greater part of the year. Roes *are* sometimes in pride of grease, and when shot in this state are superior venison to either red or fallow deer.

*The Moor and The Loch.* JOHN COLQUHOUN

### THE "GENTLEMAN" AT BREAKFAST AND AT DINNER

Should a deer-stalker pamper the inner man? Shade of Abernethy forbid! He should go forth lank and lean like a greyhound; the most that can be permitted him is a few cups of coffee, a moderate allowance of fine flowery pekoe, some venison pasty, mutton chops (both are easy of digestion), a broiled grouse, of course, hot rolls, dry toast, and household bread, with a few grapes to cool him. Peaches and nectarines may be put in his pocket, because, as he will be sure to sit upon them, they will do him no earthly harm, but rather confer a benefit by moistening the outward man. The best part of a bottle of champagne may be allowed at dinner: this is not only venial, but salutary. A few tumblers of brandy and soda-water are greatly to be commended, for they are cooling. Whisky is an absolute necessary, and does not come under the name of intemperance, but rather, as Dogberry says, or ought to say, "it comes by nature". Ginger beer I hold to be a dropsical, insufficient, and unmanly beverage; I pray you avoid it!

*Deer-Stalking in the Scottish Highlands.* WILLIAM SCROPE

### HOME FROM THE HILL

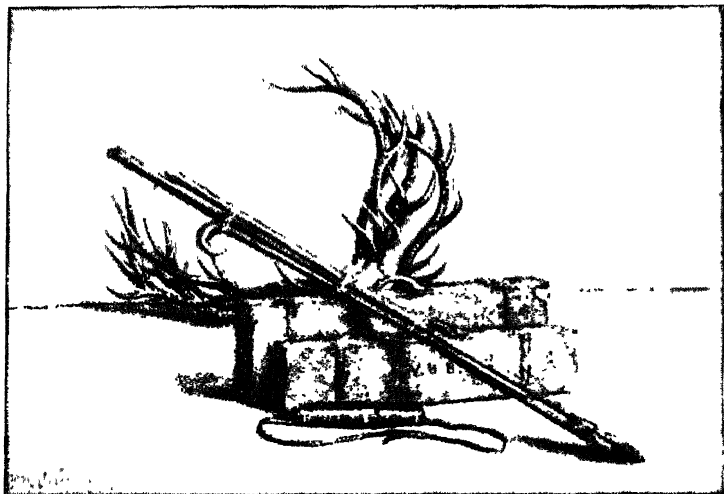
But long did we think e'er our sportsmen came hame  
To rest and partake of our fine highland game,

We lost expectation to see them that night,  
And thought they were gone to Marr Lodge till daylight,  
But at ten of evening, being a dreadful rain,  
Who rapp'd at our door but our gallant sportsmen,  
So faintish with hunger, with cold and with rain,  
So tir'd and benumb'd they could scarcely win ben,  
We flew to our whisky, which prov'd a cure ever,  
And gave each a jugful that warmed their liver,  
Some hours at the ingle did dry their outside,  
After cock-brue and toddy, all went to bed.

*Instructions for Hunting.* JAMES CHRISTIE, GAMEKEEPER (1817)



# THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER



So vale, vale!

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Spring shall come again calling up the moorland,  
Spring shall bring the sun and rain, bring the bees and flowers,  
Red shall the heather bloom on hill and valley,  
Soft flow the stream through the even flowing hours.*

R. I. STEVENSON





## THE 15<sup>TH</sup> OF OCTOBER

*BEN DORAIN*

YESTREEN I stood on Ben Dorain, and paced its dark grey path;  
Was there a hill I did not know?—a glen or grassy strath?  
Oh! gladly in the times of old I trod that glorious ground,  
And the white dawn melted in the sun, and the red deer cried  
around.

How finely swept the noble deer across the morning hill,  
While fearlessly played the fawn and doe beside the running  
rill;  
I heard the black and red grouse crow, and the bellowing of  
the deer—  
I think those are the sweetest sounds that man at dawn may  
hear.

Oh! widely as the bright day gleamed I climbed the mountain's  
breast,  
And when I to my home returned the sun was in the west;  
'Twas health and strength, 'twas life and joy to wander freely  
there,  
To drink at the fresh mountain stream, to breathe the moun-  
tain air.

Ah! much as I have done of old, how ill could I wend now,  
By glen and strath, and rocky path, up to the mountain's brow!

How ill could I the merry cup quaff deep in social cheer!  
How ill now could I sing a song in the gloaming of the year!

Yestreen I wandered in the glen; what thoughts were in my  
head!

There had I walked with friends of yore—where are those dear  
ones fled?

I looked and looked; where'er I looked was nought but sheep!  
sheep! sheep!

A woeful change was in the hill! World, thy deceit was deep!

From side to side I turn'd mine eyes—alas! my soul was sore—  
The mountain bloom, the forest's pride, the old men were no  
more;

Nay, not one antlered stag was there, nor doe so soft and slight,  
No bird to fill the hunter's bag—all, all were fled from sight!

Farewell, ye forests of the heath! hills where the bright day  
gleams!

Farewell, ye grassy dells! farewell, ye springs and leaping  
streams!

Farewell, ye mighty solitudes, where once I loved to dwell—  
Scenes of my spring-time and its joys—for ever fare you well!

*Songs and Poems.* DUNCAN BAN MACINTYRE  
(Translated from the Gaelic by Robert Buchanan)

### “AND SO GOOD-NIGHT”

As I reached the big glen Loch Bhradain lay before me with  
unruffled waters, on which numbers of trout were rising. It  
was indeed hard to realise that the end of the stalking season  
was almost here, so calm and mild the air, so green the hills.  
High above me, so that she appeared almost to touch the clouds,

the solitary eagle still soared. After a while she made her way swiftly north, soon disappearing amongst the hills. Many stags were roaring in the corries. The rushing of the hill burns carried clearly across the quiet glen.

*Wanderings of a Naturalist.* SETON GORDON

### THE LAMENT FOR THE DEER

O for my strength once more to see the hills!  
The wilds of Strath-Farar of stags,  
The blue streams, and winding vales,  
Where the flowering tree sends forth its sweet perfume.

My thoughts are sad and dark!  
I lament the forest where I loved to roam,  
The secret coires, the haunt of hinds,  
Where often I watched them on the hill.

Coire-Garave! O that I was within thy bosom  
Sguir-na Làpaich of steepes, with thy shelter,  
Where feed the herds which never seek for stalls,  
But whose skin gleams red in the sunshine of the hill.

Great was my love in youth, and strong my desire,  
Towards the bounding herds;  
But now, broken, and weak, and hopeless,  
Their remembrance wounds my heart.

To linger in the laich I mourn,  
My thoughts are ever in the hills;  
For there my childhood and my youth was nursed—  
The moss and the craig in the morning breeze was my delight.

Then was I happy in my life,  
When the voices of the hill sung sweetly;  
More sweet to me, than any string,  
It soothed my sorrow, or rejoiced my heart.

My thoughts wandered to no other land  
Beyond the hill of the forest, the shealings of the deer,  
Where the nimble herds ascended the hill,  
As I lay in my plaid on the dewy bed.

The sheltering hollows, where I crept towards the hart,  
On the pastures of the glen, or in the forest wilds,  
And, if once more I may see them as of old,  
How will my heart bound to watch again the pass!

*Lays of the Deer Forest. Vol. II*

JOHN SOBIEŃSKI AND CHARLES EDWARD STUART

### THE HILLS

So we drove home, when all the great tableland was touched with yellow light from a rift in the west, and all the broken hills looked blue against the silvery grey. God bless them! for man cannot spoil them, nor any revolution shape them other than they are. They have always girdled a land of warriors and of people fond of song, from the oldest ballad-maker to that Scotch Probationer who wrote:

Lay me here, where I may see  
Teviot round his meadows flowing,  
And about and over me  
Winds and clouds for ever going.

*Angling Sketches. ANDREW LANG*

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